

"WE AMERICANS ARE TOO MODEST"—JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

VOL 31 No 4

AUGUST
1910

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THE SMART SET

A
MAG
A
ZINE
OF

**BIG
STORIES**

by
Edna Kenton,
Elliott Flower,
O. Henry,
Olivia Howard Dunbar,
Mrs. John Van Vorst,
Frank H. Shaw,
Nina Larrey Duryea,
THE PICK OF THE FICTION MARKET.

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LONDON

Ess Ess Publishing Company, 452 Fifth Avenue, New York

PARIS



The Smart Set for September

SOMEBODY wrote us the July issue was "a bird." What kind he didn't say. We hope he meant a nice bird. At any rate, it wasn't a parrot or a mocking bird. Perhaps he meant a rooster—we were crowing a little last month.

Well, why not? We don't care. Assume, then, he compares us to Chantecler. When Chantecler crowed the new day began—or when the new day began Chantecler crowed—whichever way you prefer to put it—it doesn't matter. Anyhow, when the SMART SET uttered its first cluck ten years ago a new day in magazines began. If you don't believe it, look at all the fiction magazines that have sprung up since, fashioned on our lines—imitators, every one of 'em!

One reader wrote that she picked up the magazine at a time when the devil and the forces of good were struggling within her. With the courage she gained through reading "the splendid collection of material in the July number"—she says—she braced up, put in her best day's work and completely knocked out the devil and all his works. So she wrote a long letter to tell us all about it.

Pretty good work that. All we try to do is entertain—but when the entertainment can act as a "bracer" and renew even one reader's strength, we feel as though we're of some little use in the world after all.

This August number goes forth with the high hope of its perpetrators that it will lead some weary soul out of the Vale of Gloom into the Highlands of Cheerfulness.

For September we plan a *tour de force*. You'll read about it on another page. It means a bigger magazine, too—more for your money—the biggest 25 cents' worth of real live literature ever offered. Among the regular features planned are:

WYNDHAM MARTYN'S latest novel, "Daphne," a story of a girl who goes to Paris to study music. There's lots of action in this novel, which will please readers equally with the same author's recent success, "The Man Outside."

GOVERNEUR MORRIS—"The Weak Brother," a spirited story of New York clubs and Mexican mines.

VAN TASSEL SUTPHEN—"When Half-Gods Go," a breezy tale of modern society butterflies.

"MRS. MEECHAM'S 'RUINGS'"—by David Gault. A humorous story of England that will strike home to everyone who's ever been a "tourist"—or hopes to be.

"THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM"—by Mrs. Oscar Beringer. A delightful idyl of town and country—the fable of the city mouse and the country mouse reversed.

"THE TEST"—by Fred Jackson; "The Parson and the Pickpocket," a mystifying tale of an Atlantic liner; and a lot of other stories, all marked by cleverness and piquancy.

In **"THE INTERESTING ENGLISHMAN,"** Carl Hanson points out the reasons why some American girls pass by their own hardworking countrymen to marry one of those deuced clever chaps from the other side, don't ye know, old top!

Promises to be a ripping number, what?

An Announcement of Interest

THE SMART SET MAGAZINE was founded in 1900 upon some radical ideas and as a distinct departure from the usual type of monthly publications.

It was to be a strictly fiction magazine.

It was to contain no illustrations.

It was to depend upon no authors' names for its popularity.

It was to publish stories simply for their merit, even were they the first production of the writer.

It was to publish a complete novel in each number.

It was to have no serial or continued stories.

It was to give the purchaser 160 pages of text, the brightest and cleverest things that its editors could discover.

Contrary to the current idea of that day—the cheap ten-cent magazine—it was to sell for twenty-five cents.

Its founder believed that if its contents were of sufficiently high order the reading public would cheerfully pay that price.

IT SUCCEEDED

From its first number it was accorded a first place in the current literature purchased by the cultured world.

It quickly attained an exceptionally large circulation.

Its popularity caused a great number of imitations, or attempts at imitation, in fiction magazines at low price.

A decade has now passed, and the intelligent and discriminating readers of America and Europe have so steadily grown in appreciation of what the editors of **SMART SET** have given them that it holds to-day far and away the very first place in current fiction.

It now proposes a new departure.

ENLARGEMENT

It has been suggested that there are many readers who, while highly appreciating our magazine with its completed stories, would find an added interest in a long novel published serially. To test the strength of this sentiment, and at the same time in no way curtail the ample assemblage of short stories on which the magazine's wide popularity has rested, the management of **SMART SET** has decided to add to the present size of the magazine 16 text pages, and use them in giving serially long novels by the most notable authors. This enlargement will begin with the

SEPTEMBER NUMBER

and the first serial will be an exceedingly strong novel by

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

admittedly the most delightful and entertaining of fiction writers of the day, entitled

“HAVOC”

which instantly commands the interest of the reader and holds it intensely to the end.

It will run through six or seven of the numbers following September.

"A pure woman faithfully presented"

(SALLY BISHOP)

by Temple Thurston

"She did right because she went where her heart took her. She was warned, but she followed love. Maybe too well. But nobly. Beautifully. The world would be quite sure Sally was a social peril. But I am more sure that she was a social savior. Without a thought deeper than her love she fathomed the profoundest seas. She was so simply true where most of us are so ornately false."

—Horace Traubel in *The Conservator*.

"The most engrossing as well as the most pathetic novel that has come to our tables for a long time, . . . so beautifully done, so clearly and exquisitely written, that it is a pleasure as well as a duty for a reviewer to recommend it to the discriminating reader. One will not find a better novel in many a day."—*Indianapolis News*.

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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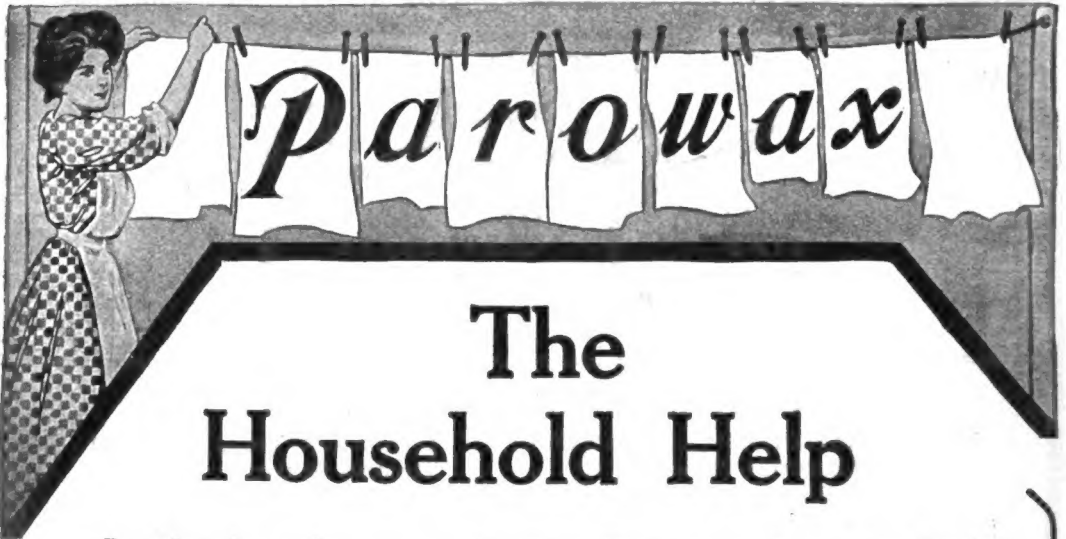
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The Household Help

In the laundry or washroom Parowax is a wonderful help. It is of value to the housewife or laundress in two distinct ways—it saves time and labor in washing and lengthens the life of the clothes. Did you ever stop to think why you have to rub clothes as well as soap them? This is the reason: You have to rub the clothes in order to loosen the dirt.

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MARCO'S MAELSTROM

By LAURENCE DITTO YOUNG

“D O you remember that story—”
“You insult me. I remember every story that was ever written.”

“—of Poe’s,” proceeded Marco, “where the man was sailing on the coast of—”

“—Norway, and got caught in a dreadful whirlpool? You mean ‘A Descent into the Maelstrom.’ Yes, it’s a magnificent effort of Poe’s—that description of the boat hanging midway down a vast black funnel with spinning sides of liquid ebony—”

“Leila, did you broach this topic, or did I?” asked Marco.

“You did, of course; but it being a literary topic, I naturally took the lead,” explained Leila.

“Well, now that you’ve said all you wish to—”

“But, Marco, I haven’t begun! Let me tell about the belt of surf—the frightful vortex—”

“Leila! I insist upon having the floor! You chatter, chatter, while my heart is breaking. I don’t care whether it’s a good story or not; I only spoke of it because I envy that Norwegian sailor—he had at least ‘one crowded hour of glorious life!’”

Leila, silenced, thrust one pretty white hand into her red-gold hair and assumed a conversational pose. It had come at last, then—the breaking point of Marco’s endurance!

“But I’ve had nothing! I’m twenty-two years old, and I’ve had nothing yet!”

“Oh, my maidie!”

“No, Leila; you can’t hush me any longer with your ‘maidies’ and ‘girlies’ and ‘childs’! I am the most un-

happy creature that draws breath on this earth!”

“If to be young, fair, healthy, provided with easy work and good pay—”

“What is the use of good pay when I save every cent?”

“And freedom—” went on Leila.

“Ah, you prize freedom more than I because you have been married. I suppose it really was a hideous slavery!”

“Oh, certainly!”

“Well, you always say it was, but sometimes I don’t trust you. But, anyway, bad or good, you’ve had the experience, while I haven’t had that or any other. It’s not marriage especially that I want—it’s any change from this dull, dead and alive, hum-drum existence. I am besieged by a hundred stinging needs and longings, by desperate resolves. I *will* wrest from Fortune a few of her treasures; I *will live!*”

“If you were rich, girlie, what would you buy first?” asked Leila.

“Ah, you think to cheat me into a few moments of peace by playing the children’s game of choosing, as you have often done,” scoffed Marco.

“Well, I think I can surprise you this time. I would buy neither a motor nor a yacht nor a snake armlet, but a robe, a *negligée* of pearl satin brocaded with great loose-leaved roses, pink, white, creamy, canary salmon, with green leaves and brown ones and thorny red stems.”

“It sounds like a floral guide or a seed catalogue,” remarked Leila.

“There should be nothing so trivial as a ribbon about my gown. The girdle must be of delicate Chinese embroidery, the slippers of gray kid

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wrought with silver. What do you think of it?"

"Of the costume I think well; of your wild desire to possess it, not so well."

"Oh, Leila, it's only the things it represents that I care for—wealth, elegance, leisure, cups like petrified flowers, deep, rich rugs, antique silver, thinnest glass traced with frostwork of ferns and grasses, ivory combs, a gold stamp box—"

"And books—loads of books!" exclaimed Leila, carried away by the picture.

"Um—well, yes—on Tokio vellum, with gilt edges."

"Oh, no, Marco—deckeled!"

"I don't care—but these are the things I want, the things I was born for," declared Marco. Her soft black eyes glittered through tears upon Leila's brown ones. "I ask these things of Fate," Marco went on, "and if I didn't believe that Fate would one day answer me I would poison myself tonight!"

"That would be a descent into a maelstrom, indeed," said Leila; "but there would be only misery in that short, sick gyration. You're not looking for a hopeless engulfing. Let me see—did the man in the story get out?"

"I thought you knew it so well! Certainly he got out; how else could he have told about it?"

"Well, Marco, people don't always escape; they go down, down, and miss everything. You know what Brown-ing says:

"It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being sane than mad."

Marco gazed piteously at her friend. "I don't wish to know or to do anything wrong," she affirmed. "I only want my share of excitement and pleasure."

"But I have been in a maelstrom, Marco," said Leila softly; "and I came out of it stripped and bruised and all but broken."

"I don't care what happened to you," sighed Marco; "I want my own chance, my own maelstrom."

Then they both laughed.

"But how can I find it?" demanded the girl. "Drifting won't do it—I have tried that long enough."

"When a camel wants straw he stretches out his neck," say the Persians," observed Leila the quoter. "You won't marry?"

"No one has asked me, sir, she said," Marco quoted in her turn.

"No, and never will with that cold, haughty, touch-me-not way of yours. The stage?"

"But that means work! And I have no talent."

"No; your whole training has been one of repression, not expression. The stock market?"

Marco turned pale. "My ducats, oh, my ducats! No, I haven't the boldness for that. Oh, Leila, I'm wearying you and spoiling your evening; I'll go out for a walk and let you work. Perhaps when I come home even this will seem a blessed haven of rest."

"This" was the tiny apartment the two young women shared, full of little shifts and contrivances, as is usual in such a case, and which seem clever or contemptible according to the proprietor's mood.

"I'll go with you," said Leila.

"No; let me have the one privilege of poverty—liberty to go about alone without fear of shocking aristocratic connections. Besides, I want to think."

"I might ask as the woman did of her husband, 'What with?'" said Leila. "But I refrain, and merely inquire, 'What about?'"

"Why, the eternal question we have just been discussing," returned Marco—"whether it's impossible for us ever to emerge from this wretched treadmill of work and parsimony and helplessness!"

The mock expression of fatigue which Leila allowed to overspread her countenance was not wholly assumed, and when Marco, having hastily donned cap and jacket, had run downstairs and into the street, she thought with a remorseful twinge: "I have tired and teased her, perhaps broken the wings of all the pretty fancies that might have fluttered about her this evening."

Oh, how weak I am to spend all my time in useless repinings! If there were any power in my make-up I should *do* something instead!"

II

SWIFTLY, with the light, free swing of youth, Marco passed unafraid through a quiet street or two, then threaded her way in the crowds in the main thoroughfare of Wycherley. The glances of admiration cast upon her beautiful dark face and upon the figure whose swaying walk was more charming than the dancing of many other women, she seemed not to see, really did not see, in fact, for it was not such cheap and simple tribute as this which could gratify her. All the forces of her nature were concentrated upon one ambition, to the exclusion of lighter pleasures.

What she did see—and seeing, envied—were the chiffons and laces, the gauzy fans and painted parasols and spangled robes in the department store windows, the roses and orchids at the florists', the throngs entering the theaters, the glittering hotels, the broughams of wealth—above all, the motors of fabulous opulence. Ah, how those motors skimmed and swirled, as if they owned Wycherley; nay, owned the whole earth! Particularly the limousine of the great Mrs. Wycherley herself, in which Marco divined velvets and ermine and diamonds adorning a regal personality.

"I'll do it!" said Marco to herself, goaded into action by the contemplation of these luxuries. "For tonight I'll ape a practice of the rich, and perhaps some inspiration will teach me to secure it permanently."

She thrilled at the audacity of the idea, hesitated, decided, then set off for the railway station.

"How mean to take such a treat without Leila!" she thought. "And it will cost fearfully—a whole day's earnings, and more!"

She slipped in at one door of the building and out at another, amid a group of arriving passengers.

"Carriage, miss?" cried several voices at once, and with a nod Marco appointed the oldest of the speakers to be her charioteer. He was a middle-aged Irishman, shabby in dress, with twinkling eyes and a good-humored face.

"Yes, miss; any baggage?" said the favored Jehu. "This way, please—and where to, miss?"

"No baggage. You may drive me about the city a while," said Marco coolly. "Get back here in time for the Western Express."

"Sure, miss; it leaves at nine-thirty, and that gives you an hour and a half to see the sights." He conducted her through the crowd to the curb, and would have hastily ushered her into the vehicle; but Marco drew back in dismay.

"Oh! Such thin horses!" she cried. "Aren't they too old and weak?"

"They're not a day older than yourself, miss," said the man, trying to laugh it off. Then, with sudden gravity: "Why should I try to conceal it? They *are* old, and fitter for the bone-yard than the street. I'd trade them off for a better pair and give a mortgage, only there's a mortgage on even these poor brutes, worse luck!"

Mortgage! The word conjured up in Marco's mind melancholy visions of bygone days.

"But the ould rig is clane, and it will hold together for your drive, young leddy. An'—an' I need the money awful bad!"

A sympathizing nature is productive of more annoyance and discomfort to its owner than of good to the object of its benevolence. Marco realized that she would proceed at a funeral pace, that she would quiver with commiseration for the jaded animals, and that the whole turnout was beneath the notice of a lady of elevated tastes; but she could not resist the temptation to patronize the poor Irishman rather than his sleeker brethren. She paid him in advance, stepped into the carriage and they were off.

To most persons a solitary and aimless drive on a winter's night, at a

snail's pace, in a musty and creaking equipage, will appear the dreariest of occupations. Marco found it at first exhilarating to the spirits, and laughed childishly as she assumed graceful and languid poses one after the other, fancying herself on the way to various functions and *festas*, where the world would fall at her feet.

But presently she put away these slight musings and set herself to the deep meditation which was the object of her drive.

"How do men get rich?" she asked herself.

There were three methods. First, plodding industry and thrift. But this was very slow going and antiquated. Marco had faithfully pursued a rigid course of self-denial for four years, and she had saved but six hundred dollars. No, save she never so wisely, she could never save a fortune out of her salary.

Secondly, rascality. This, too, was out of the question. She hoped, she was almost certain that she would never stoop to any get-rich-quick schemes of dubious character; but she sighed as she admitted that none were open to her.

Thirdly, by nerve. Nerve! Ah, there spoke the talismanic word, the magic word that whispered hope!

She had read of men securing real estate or a drygoods stock with no capital, no connections, no prospect of success, men like Sadeye, who because of their nerve succeeded.

She believed herself to possess something of that mysterious quality, that admirable combination of daring, coolness and ability.

"But how to exert it?" she queried for the thousandth time, but with a new, a passionate intensity. "How can I reach the markets of trade and speculation—how enter a wedge into the vast barrier of the world's indifference?"

Suddenly to this deep searching summons some innermost unsuspected cell of her brain responded, recalling and repeating words forgotten for ten years, words which floated clear and bell-like out of the shadowy past, which

linked her present life to another life, a great and powerful life, and which breathed golden promises for the future.

It was like the first glimpse of land to a shipwrecked mariner. Marco gasped with relief and delight.

"Oh, why did I never think of it before?" she cried, the happy tears rushing to her eyes. "I will go to him tomorrow. He will help me. It's an inspiration!"

And then, her reverie so happily ended, she glanced out of the window. They were downtown once more, passing the Camelot Club.

At that instant the carriage abruptly stopped. The man sprang down from the box, and Marco opened the door and stepped out. A young man descending the steps of the clubhouse came hastily forward. Marco had known him by sight all her life; it was Rex Wycherley.

One of the horses was lying outstretched on the pavement. The Irishman was stooping over him, stroking the animal's neck and loosening the harness from the gaunt, shuddering frame.

They were already ringed about by a hundred persons. Rex Wycherley quietly thrust back one or two who were jostling Marco.

"Is your horse hurt?" he asked.

"He's dyin', sir," said the Irishman, with a catch in his voice. "An' he's tired out and worn out, an' I don't know as I can grudge him his rest."

Marco gazed at the young man. She heard the roar of the Maelstrom in her ears. What if it were given to her, to her alone of all women, to chase the sadness away forever from those weary eyes, to dispel the pain whose secret the whole city knew?

"It's hard to see an old friend that's worked for ye year in an' year out break down and die at last," said the Irishman, strangling a sob. "An' it's harder still when it's your wife's bread and butter that's going, and medicine for your sick daughter—she have the consumption, miss—an'—well, well, poor old lad, this is the last of him!"

And as the final convulsion passed over the faithful dumb servant, his master covered his eyes and wept outright.

Rex Wycherley took off his hat and stood with bared head in recognition of the finished service. No one dared to jeer him. Marco trembled; she felt herself buffeted by emotions as by waves.

The gentleman laid his hand upon the toiler's shoulder for a moment.

"Come to me in the morning," he said kindly. "My name and address—"

"Sure I know 'em both, Mr. Wycherley, as well as my own!"

"That's all right, then. Here, officer, see that this animal is carted away, will you? And help the driver to get the carriage clear. But, first of all, ring up a taxicab for this lady."

"Oh, no, don't trouble," said Marco, fearful lest the Irishman should mention the Western Express, now, indeed, nearly due. "I live not far from here and can easily walk."

"Very well—I will accompany you," said Wycherley with calm authority. And he attempted to introduce himself; but, as the Irishman had done, Marco interrupted him.

"It's superfluous, I assure you, Mr. Wycherley," she said, smiling. "I recognized you at once as you were coming down the steps."

"From my picture in the papers, I suppose," he said, regarding her with gloom.

"Oh, no; you were pointed out to me when I was a little girl, and I've watched you grow up," said Marco cheerfully.

"How strange! And I've never seen you until tonight. And now—But I don't even know your name."

"My name is Marco Massie."

"Marco Massie!" He mused upon it as they walked along, and spoke no more until they reached her door and she had thanked him. Then he said gently: "Well, Marco Massie, I wish we had known each other when we were children, that's all!"

"But perhaps we shall meet again,"

ventured Marco, her heart beating to suffocation.

"No. It's too late. Good night, Marco."

She ran upstairs, let herself into the flat and stood gazing upon Leila, who, curled in rosy slumber, was smiling in her sleep.

"Leila, Leila! Wake up and hear my adventures! I am certainly in the Maelstrom's fringe of breakers, all but submerged!"

"Oh, Marco! Is it only you? I thought it was Louis—I was dreaming of him."

III

"Did you smile at him, Marco? You are always so grave and repelling," averred Leila, as she poured the sinful coffee of midnight which Marco had just prepared as a wild climax to the evening.

Thus accused, Marco shook her head contritely. "No, I don't think I smiled," she said. "It was all too serious for that."

"Poor little Thornrose asleep in the wood! You didn't see that the Prince was standing at your mercy, ready for surrender and for victory! And such a Prince, at once real and fairy, 'with vassals and serfs at his side!'"

Marco hugged herself, laughing softly. "See, Leila, all the money in my cup!" she said, carefully securing the tiny bubbles with a spoon. "No, I had something very important to think about, something I can't tell you yet; and I couldn't put my mind on captivating that young man. And besides, girls as pretty as I am probably border his way as thick as violets on a woodland path in May."

"Well, every time you could smile and don't, it's a distinct loss to humanity," said Leila. "Your eyes are wonderful then; there are little flashing points of light in them like sparkles on a brook. They are like my dear lost Louis's eyes—"

"Oh, Shamus O'Brien, why don't you come home?"

Sure you don't know how happy I'd be,

Oh, why did I let you get out of my arms,
Like a bird from its cage to go free?"

sang Marco.

"Louis's eyes!" murmured she who had loved and lost them. "You couldn't see any division 'twixt pupil and iris, it was all one depth of melting blackness, like a mountain tarn under a storm cloud. I used to mirror myself in them, to swim in them. Lakes of Love, I called them."

"Have you ever written them up?" inquired Marco. "They are good for three sonnets and a villanelle."

"Soft and sweet as purple pansy petals they seemed sometimes; at others they were somber, savage; again, when he was angry or jealous, they were like snapping black fires; and when he was terribly aroused and enraged you could see little devils shoveling coal into the black fires!"

"How grand!" said Marco. "What made him jealous?"

"To meet his eyes across a crowded room—to transfix his gaze with my own for one thrilling instant—ah, what a joy that was!"

"What made him—"

"He had a trick of giving long side-wise glances, to exploit the contrast formed by the white of the eye."

"If I ever have a husband who runs away I will never be so spiteful as you are, nor expose his vanity and weakness," declared Marco. "For the third time I ask you, what made him—"

"Jealous? My dear, his name is Louis Robideaux; he is French—*voilà tout!* Jealousy—a toxic weed it is, that chokes the corn and wheat of life and poisons all the air. He didn't even like my writing—said it took up too much of my time and distracted my attention from its legitimate owner—himself. I told him I was driven on by a resistless impulse."

"Oh! And were you really?" asked Marco.

"Why, of course! The fine frenzy that Shakespeare knew."

"Oh, yes, Shakespeare!" granted Marco.

"And I had to write—we were poor—my little cheques were very opportune

sometimes. And what he called flirting I called the study of men. 'Why not put me into your stories?' he implored. 'What! And spoil them?' said I; and he was more jealous than ever."

"Pour Louis!"

"Tempests, hurricanes, whirlwinds of passion swept us along; it was *my* maelstrom, Marco! At parties, when he was so gay and courteous, I often thought: 'Now perhaps he will kill me tonight.' But he never got quite worked up to that pitch. He never," she added regretfully, "he never even struck me."

"He was a brave and patient man," declared Marco. "Did he go away in a fit of anger?"

"No," said the abandoned one mournfully. "He was fiendishly cool about it. We hadn't quarreled for hours, and one morning when he was going out I asked if he would bring me a box of my favorite toilet soap when he came to lunch. He promised, kissed me good-bye and departed. That was two years ago, and I have never seen him since nor received a line from him. He didn't even send up the soap by a messenger."

"You could never have deserved that, Leila; he was very cruel."

"Well, I don't know," said Leila. "Some women are so tormenting that their inevitable destiny is to be deserted or killed. When I read of a wife murder I never say, 'how unnatural—how brutal!' No—I realize the process by which the wretched man was harassed and infuriated by his wife till her destruction seemed to him a virtuous deed. I never blamed Rex Wycherley."

"How did you ever come to marry Louis?"

"Haven't I told you about his eyes? No girl could resist those eyes. When I think of them even now I could forgive him all and take him back."

"Why don't you?"

"He wouldn't come. He thinks he ought to do all the forgiving that is to be done. Besides, I have become perfectly indifferent and callous. Love

and pain are alike erased from my heart. Ah, how I grieved when he left me! But that's over, and I shall never shed another tear for Louis Robideaux! And now let's get to bed and to sleep."

Darkness—quiet.

"Leila!"

"Yes, maide?"

"Why did he call me just Marco? Why didn't he call me Miss Massie?"

"That's part of his Socialism—every one he meets is his brother or his sister on the instant. They say he has never ridden with an empty seat in his auto one single mile; he picks up any pedestrian he overtakes who will go with him."

Another long silence. Then: "Marco!"

"Yes, dear?"

"You don't believe he is dead, do you? The stars would have stopped shining—I should have guessed it, and died, too!"

"But you said you didn't care for him!"

"'Twas a lie."

"But you are happy in your writing!"

"I loathe it! I'd drown my pen if it would bring his return one day sooner!"

"Couldn't you write to him?"

"I'd die first! I'm too proud—I'm *all* pride, Marco! Besides, I don't know where to address him."

"Couldn't you advertise?"

"I can pray. I'm not very religious; but the only happy moments I ever know are those I spend on my knees, praying God to put into Louis's heart the wish to come back. Now be still and go to sleep."

"Yes—and perhaps tomorrow—"

IV

THIS is what Marco recollected in the carriage:

A burning August afternoon, a small yard, a tiny porch shaded with woodbine. Herself, a child of twelve, in a

patched gingham frock, just come in from school, sitting on the lowest step, her books and her hat beside her.

Her mother, a tall, sallow woman, leaned back in a rocking chair, pale with heat and fatigue, and fanned herself wearily.

"I've finished the ironing," she said.

"Not all, I hope?"

"No; I left some of the plain pieces for you."

"I'm glad," said Marco, and did not see that it was a strange thing for a child to be glad of—the opportunity to work hard by a hot stove through the fervid August hours. Love had sweetened this task and many others.

"Not but what they're all plain enough," resumed the mother. "There isn't a scrap of lace or fine stuff to hang on the line washdays, and a shabby washing tells everything to the neighbors. It's discouraging."

"Yes," assented Marco. She was chilled and puzzled by this despondency.

"That's what makes moving so hard for poor folks," the mother murmured on. "When furniture is set in a tidy room it doesn't look so bad; but when it's piled upside down and carted along on a wagon under a glaring sun, it's indecent—you can't see anything by breaks and tears and stains!"

"Poor folks!" repeated Marco. "I suppose we *are* poor, aren't we, mother?"

"Very, very poor, Marco."

"And won't it ever be any different?"

"No, dear, I'm afraid not. When you were little I felt that there must be a pleasant future for my baby, and I used to plan wonderful things. Ah, me! The years have gone by, and nothing is done."

"Wait till I can help," said the child confidently. "When I'm through school and have got a place to teach, things will be easier."

"Easier!" said the mother with scorn. "You don't see what I mean, Marcie. I never used to content myself with thinking that things would be simply easier. What I wanted was to see you a rich lady with a purple silk

dress and a white lace parasol and a gold opera chain around your neck."

"Oh!" cried Marco, thrilling at this vision of barbaric splendor.

"But now I don't see anything for it," said the mother gloomily, "only to let you go on in your humble path till some young man as poor as yourself persuades you to work your fingers to the bone for him."

Marco mildly resented the implied reflection on her father. "Everybody says, mother, that you are very lucky to have such a good, sober husband."

"Oh, I don't need anyone to tell me what I should be thankful for," said the mother. "Your father is the best man in the world; honest, patient, always with a smile and a friendly word. I liked him the first moment I saw him; it was at a dance—"

"Oh! Then I can go to dances if we are poor?"

"No, you can't—never!" said the woman sharply. Then, more softly: "You're just between hay and grass, as the saying is; you won't be invited to nice dances, and you're a notch ahead of the kind I went to. Well, after that first waltz with Andrew Massie none of the others had any chance with me."

"Oh! And can you really waltz?"

"Can I waltz, indeed? I surely can, and I'll teach you, Marcie, some day when I'm not so tired."

"Oh, how nice!" said Marcie. A word recurred to her. "Others? What do you mean, mother? Did you have fellows besides father?"

"Certainly I did—why should I not? You can't realize it, darlie, but I was a very pretty girl."

"You're very pretty now," said Marco, jumping up to kiss her. "But tell me about the others—all of them—one a day as long as they last!"

Marco's mother laughed. "Well, you'll tire of it before I shall," she said. "I'll enjoy counting the scalps once more! I'll begin with the best of all—a man who is up at the top of the tree."

"Was he rich when you knew him?"

"Mercy, no! If he had been rich,

how could I have been acquainted with him? But we all knew, even then, that he would be rich some day. He was always talking about going to Europe, and was studying languages, and he could recite a whole French poem about a girl called Marco."

"My name!"

"Yes—when you came along and I wanted an odd, pretty name for my precious, I remembered the beautiful, happy Marco that Kerry used to tell about, and I thought it suited."

"Does Mr. Kerry know about me?"

"Oh, no, and never will. He was a printer on a little paper. After a while he helped the editor some in writing and lent the proprietor his savings; and all of a sudden he was both editor and owner."

"How grand!"

"Yes, and the paper got smarter than ever, and just as folks began to say that he would kill himself working on it, he sold it out at a big profit and went into real estate and politics and I don't know what all! And whenever a speech was to be made or a delegate sent he was the one chosen."

"And is he good, too?"

"Well, he wants to be Governor some day, perhaps President; if he were not good he would not dare think of those places."

"His little girls must have a good time."

"He hasn't any little girls, or boys, either. He never married. But he goes to every ball and banquet in this town. I read in the paper the other day that he belongs to thirty-seven clubs and societies."

"He ought to have married," said the child decidedly. "It's wicked to use all that money for himself."

"Well, Marcie, you don't understand," said the mother. "Marrying is different from other things. A man doesn't, or shouldn't, take a wife just for the sake of company. If he cannot get the girl he wants, he goes without any wife at all."

"Oh, I see! and oh, mother, you were the one Mr. Kerry wanted!"

"Hush, dear! Say no more about it;

here comes your father. Oh, Andy, was there ever such a hot day? I'm just about used up."

When Marco went in to set the table she was alone with her mother a moment.

"Tell me his name," whispered the girl.

"Whose name? Oh, you must forget all that idle talk, child, and never speak of it again."

"Perhaps I may have heard of him," coaxed Marco.

"Perhaps? Well, I should think you had! They say the Camelot Club offers a standing reward to any paper that will go two days without mentioning his name. He was always Kerry to me, and would be if I met him in the White House. It's the Honorable Cosmo Kerrigan."

V

"MISS MASSIE," read Mr. Kerrigan from a card handed him as the short winter's day was closing in. "Can it be their child?" he mused. "Strange! I was reminded of the old times this afternoon; I fancied the whiffs of spring from the violets in Regina's auto vase were responsible; but possibly—Admit Miss Massie!"

And suddenly she was on the threshold, poised with the effect of a bird alighting—all in black, except the sharp scarlet wings on her wide black hat. The full, soft waves of hair and the great gloomy eyes were black, the lips a vivid coral, the face a clear, creamy white.

"Pure United States, no doubt, but yet how tropic—how Spanish!" was Kerrigan's inward comment.

"Mr. Kerrigan? Did you get my telegram?"

"Why—let me see—"

"Oh, a mental one, I mean!" explained Marco breathlessly. "I have been praying and willing all the afternoon that you would recall my parents."

"Then I did receive it," said Kerrigan, startled. "That is, if you are the child of my old friend, Andrew Massie."

"Indeed I am!"

"Well, well! Andy's girl—Celia's girl! I am very glad to meet you, Miss Massie!" And he clasped her hand cordially. "And how is your father?"

"Oh, sir, he is dead. He died five years ago."

"Is it possible? I had never heard."

"It was in the papers."

"Of course—of course!" And perhaps he was touched by the contrast between that meager two-line notice and the flowers of eloquence the press would one day put forth for him. "Poor Andy! So they go, one by one. Your mother, I knew, had passed over."

"Yes—father survived her only two years," said Marco. "We had a great deal of sickness and trouble, and father was often out of work, and when the mortgage was foreclosed it broke mother's heart. They had waited and saved so long before they dared marry, and they worked so hard afterward—it was too much of a struggle."

"Many a time I have met your father on the street," said the gentleman, "and I have said: 'Andy, how goes it? Can I be of any service to you?' I never meant to be patronizing, but perhaps he thought me so, for he would always say: 'No, no, Kerry; I'm all right. You keep your end up and I'll keep mine.'"

"That was just like father!" cried Marco, with a glow of pride in his sturdy independence.

"Well," said Kerrigan, grieving over the lost opportunity, "I should have taken such talk for just what it was worth and forced some assistance on him."

"Never mind," consoled Marco. "It wasn't your fault. You help so many people all the time."

"Your mother's life might have been very different," said Kerrigan, staring at his visitor from under his heavy brows as if he would drag from her a regret concerning her paternity."

"Yes, I know," said Marco softly. "She told me. But I don't think she was ever sorry. She was never sad when father was in the house."

"Ah, that's good!" said Kerrigan. "But why have you never called to see me before?"

"I had forgotten all about what mother told me," explained Marco. "For so many years I have longed for a friend, kind and strong like you, to stand me in place of my parents, and I might have come to you—although you seem much, much younger than they—scarcely older than myself. But it was as if a veil had fallen and blotted all that out, even to my forgetting how I was given my Christian name. But last night as I was driving in a carriage—"

"Last night—you were driving?" said Kerrigan, startled for the second time. He held up an imperious hand to impose a flashing silence. Last night! Why, what was it Rex Wycherley had said in the auto an hour ago?

"Last night, Kerrigan, I saw a girl in a carriage who was so beautiful, so poetic, so Oriental, that I recalled the phrase of Balzac's baron—'A face out of the Bible!'"

And Kerrigan had responded quietly: "Rex, my lad, I never heard you say so much for any woman before. Shall you see her again?"

"God forbid!" laughed Rex. "A burnt child, you know, Kerrigan!"

And Kerrigan had stifled a sigh and silently accepted his own disappointment.

"Please proceed, Miss Massie," said Kerrigan after a moment. "You were driving, you say, last evening?"

"Yes, and I had an adventure. One of the horses dropped dead, and I was escorted home by poor Mr. Wycherley. How very sad he is! But it was before that, as I sat thinking, that a mist rolled away from some covert in my brain, and I saw that there was a tiny, slight connection between my unknown, unimportant self and a very great person—in short, yourself."

"This is the audacity," mused Kerrigan, "of complete innocence." Aloud he said: "I am intensely interested, Miss Massie, and I will do anything in my power to help you."

Marco sat frowning with thought, seeking the least crude expression for her mercenary desires. Suddenly Leila's last warning recurred to her: "Don't bother to smile at him, for it will do no good. All Wycherley knows where Cosmo Kerrigan's affection is placed."

And at the recollection Marco did smile involuntarily, charmingly—it was a sunburst of gaiety and beauty. Kerrigan caught his breath. "Ah, Rex," he said inwardly, "you think to escape her, do you? You'll go down like Bois Guilbert before Ivanhoe! Well, what is it?" he added aloud.

"Oh, Mr. Kerrigan—I want to be rich!"

"Ah—a highly original wish!"

"And I want you to let me into some deal on the ground floor."

"Oh, you have some capital, then?"

"A little," smiled Marco. "But I don't know how to invest. And we thought, Mrs. Robideaux and I—we keep house together—that perhaps you would come to see us some time when you are not busy, and we could talk it over. Couldn't you come to tea?"

"I fear," said Kerrigan guardedly, "that my dinner engagements would not permit that pleasure for some time to come." He dared not risk the chief meal of his day in these girls' incompetent hands. Their tea was sure to taste as it were made of a mortuary wreath, with queer flavors of geraniums and tuberoses.

"But couldn't you come to luncheon?" persisted Marco.

"Well, yes," he said, resigning himself, "I think I might manage that."

"Next Sunday—at one o'clock?"

"Yes, I shall certainly be there, and I thank you for the invitation," he said courteously. Then, as they shook hands at parting, he gazed at her earnestly and remarked:

"You do not resemble either parent. You referred to your name—is it the same as your mother's—Celia?"

"No; I was named for a Lady of Dreams, and perhaps I look like her—a girl who danced in a poem—a song. You will recite those lines for me some

day, won't you? For my name is Marco."

VI

It was a very dainty table which the two girls set forth on Sunday.

At one o'clock precisely the Honorable Cosmo Kerrigan's coupé conferred glory on the street, rolling and glittering in the winter sunshine, with the large coal black horses shining like satin.

Kerrigan mounted the stairs as briskly as a lad and greeted his two hostesses, fresh and charming in their white linen frocks. Then they sat down at the tiny round table, and it was quite wonderful and delightful to observe that each dish which had been provided happened to be an especial favorite with the distinguished visitor.

There was no ice to be broken, and Kerrigan plunged at once into business.

"And so, Miss Massie, you want to be rich?"

"More than ever before in my life."

"Yes—but why? Your life here seems to me idyllic."

"Does it?" flashed out the girl in irrepressible bitterness. "Idyllic, indeed! I loathe every mean, petty, sordid detail of our wretched existence. Such a thing as pleasure is unknown to us. We dare not spend a dollar idly lest we finish in the poorhouse."

"To be true and honest and to do every duty with all our might—nothing else really counts," preached Kerrigan. "What does it matter whether we live daintily or plainly?"

"Why, it matters nothing to humanity at large," said the girl recklessly, "but it's everything to me. Perhaps I'm so bad that you can't understand me. I have no outlook, no interests except myself. I don't want to do my duty; I don't care about being true and sincere and of value in the world. All I want is money and pretty clothes."

"And if this brilliant creature in the splendid flower of her youth does not merit queenly array," thought Kerrigan, "then no woman on earth does."

"It doesn't sound like a high ambition, does it?" she went on. "But I can think of nothing but how to obtain these luxuries. They are not luxuries to me; they are necessities. Without them I cannot half live. With them—well, I cannot say; but perhaps if there is anything high and fine in my nature it might then develop."

Kerrigan patted her little clenched hand.

"When I was younger," went on Marco, "I fancied that what I wished would come to pass by the mere force of my wishing. You know that if you love a person long and deeply enough that person will at last turn to you—"

"Really?" said Kerrigan.

"Oh, beyond a doubt; and I thought that in some miraculous manner wealth would come to me because I longed so for it. I am more determined to be rich than any man ever was; and I will be—I will be!"

And Kerrigan said to himself admiringly: "Untamable energy! She is Andy's child after the flesh, but in spirit she is mine!"

"But these last two or three years I've seen that I must do something. Oh, how I've labored and studied over the problem! And I haven't done anything, after all, except come to you."

"What a bold venture! You are a true buccaneer!"

"Don't laugh! It really took some courage to go to a great financier with such a trifle as six hundred dollars. It's not a very big nucleus for a fortune, is it?" she queried wistfully. "And yet, Mr. Kerrigan, understand me—I haven't meant to ask anything from you but advice. You mustn't eke out my small resources with your own funds. Take my money; do what you can with it; and if it's not enough and you have to lose it—why, lose it, that's all! It will be better than never having tried."

"And what if I only triple or quadruple it?" said Kerrigan. "You would be enabled to take a trip to Europe in good style—would that suffice?"

"It would be worlds better than

nothing," said Marco. "Yes, after such a tour I could contentedly settle down to hard work for the rest of my life."

"Nonsense," said Kerrigan. "Your desire for the glories of this world would be tenfold inflamed. The last lingering sweet of this life of peace and obscurity would disappear."

"It would be something for Leila and me to talk over forever," maintained Marco.

"But suppose the very best you could hope for should happen—"

"Yes, yes!" said Marco in tones of gleeful excitement.

"Suppose the six hundred dollars were actually to be, as you expressed it, the nucleus of a fortune, a really great fortune?" said Kerrigan, enjoying the growing delight in the girl's face. "Cannot your prophetic eye discern a vision of yourself visiting the slums like an angel of light, healing the sick and leading the blind—in short, holding your money in trust for your poorer and weaker brethren, and doing good as Rex Wycherley spends his life in doing?"

"Oh!" cried Marco, dismayed. She dropped her gaze upon her folded hands and seemed to search her very soul for an answer that should be at once truthful and creditable. "I'm sorry, sorry," she said at last, "but really I can't see anything except the pretty clothes!"

"Vanity, vanity! Dust and ashes!" said Kerrigan with mock severity. "You are not fit to be trusted with the responsibilities of wealth." In reality he found it touching, this passionate yearning for the trifles dear to girlhood.

Luncheon was at an end, and the rumble of wheels in the street announced that the time to which Kerrigan had limited his visit had expired. Marco rose and brought her bankbook and a signed cheque. As she gave them to Kerrigan he stood smiling down on her.

"Suppose, Marco—may I call you Marco?—suppose I happen to need just this amount myself?"

"Why—could such a thing be? Then take it—take it and welcome!"

The quick generosity of this reply pleased Kerrigan, and the speaker dwelt kindly in his thoughts.

VII

"WYCH ELMS!" said Kerrigan to his coachman—two words wasted, for the man knew that such had been his master's destination every Sunday afternoon for five years. And yet not wasted, since Kerrigan enjoyed saying the words.

"The deep roots of all our actions—like alfalfa!" reflected Kerrigan. "Here Marco Massie thinks I am going to help her to a competence from sheer kindness—from admiration of herself—for the sake of my boyhood friends; whereas I have but one simple direct motive—self. But to make Regina see it as I do—will that be possible? And Rex—he has withstood so many charmers!"

And he sat thinking earnestly, not seeing the winter landscape, till the carriage rolled between the great gateless posts and under the towering, graceful trees that gave Wych Elms its name.

Bold had been the spirit of the American Wycherley who had first settled here. He had had faith in the future of his adopted country and in the fortunes of his house, else he had never dared in his remote, uncertain day to build a dwelling that should defy the tooth of time and meet the artistic requirements of later generations. So successful had he been that Wych Elms remains to this day the show place of the city—a noble Colonial mansion, its broad, simple lines speaking the dignity and candor of its owners.

Eagerly as a boy Kerrigan leaned forward to catch the first glimpse of the drawing-room fire through the great French windows; and it was like a boy, a happy, hopeful boy, that he entered the room, where the beautiful mistress of the house awaited him.

Beautiful was she, truly, with a sophisticated charm, a conscious ele-

gance; there had never been an hour in this woman's life when she had not formed an exquisite picture. There was one iron gray lock in the big wavy brown pompadour, but that was the only sign of years upon her; and her inward comment each time she turned away from her mirror was: "I look absurdly young—no, not absurdly, but gloriously, blessedly young! Fancy me a widow and the mother of a widower!"

There were not many persons Mrs. Wycherley would cross her drawing-room to meet, but she swept forward to Kerrigan in her long white dress of Irish lace, a great amethyst cross swinging from a heavy chain of dull silver, and reached to him both her hands, crusted with gems.

"Ah, Regina! Not your lips today?"

"Cosmo!" surprise, rebuke in her tone.

"Well, 'tis a pretty game, and you may play it a little longer," said Cosmo, kissing the jeweled fingers with extremest deference. "What a wonder she is," he thought, "who can keep a man like me at bay!"

Mrs. Wycherley reclaimed her hands and led the way to the fireside.

"You've seen the papers, of course?" said Kerrigan.

"Yes; the library is knee deep in them. How do you like it?"

"I'm delighted; I couldn't have wished anything better for the lad. I know the announcement by heart: 'Married, Sylvester Cosmo Dey, of New York, and Zarrine, only child of the late Waric Vagan, of Tuttleville, Kentucky.'"

"Then the stories go on to say that Zarrine is really a queen."

"And that Silver is going to form a company to claim her throne."

"And that her emeralds eclipse any in America."

"I knew Waric Vagan. We called him 'a Kentucky king' years ago, and I see the papers do today," said Kerrigan. "But, Regina, don't you see that it means something to us personally?"

"No, Cosmo."

"Yes, I say! Didn't you give me your solemn pledged, plighted, word of honor that you would marry me as soon as three things came to pass?"

"Oh, did I really?"

"No paltering, Regina! Did you or didn't you?"

"Well, then, I did."

"Kindly repeat your oath."

"Oh, must I? Well—I, Regina Wycherley, promise to take Cosmo Kerrigan to be my lawful wedded husband as soon as his nephew Silver Dey marries, and the stigma is cleared from the name of Wycherley, and my son Rex Wycherley marries." Ah, Cosmo, we are as far away as ever from union!"

"Not at all," said Kerrigan cheerfully. "We are, on the contrary, making tremendous strides. Silver swore no girl could touch his heart, and lo, suddenly he has capitulated!"

"But Rex is an impregnable fortress."

"Not at all. He has at last seen a girl whom he admires. I have seen her, too. She is lovely and refined; I intend that he shall marry her."

"Oh, you frighten me, Cosmo, when you take that masterful tone! Dare you interfere in anything so sacred?"

"I dare anything for you, dearest," smiled Kerrigan.

"But the third stipulation, Cosmo—you can't touch that. There is no hope, is there, that Rex will ever be cleared from that horrible suspicion?"

"Why, I admit that I do not see my way yet in that matter, but as sure as there is justice in Heaven, that justice will finally see your boy's innocence established in the eyes of all men!"

Mrs. Wycherley shook her head, and two tears as bright as her diamonds sparkled on her lashes. She rose and glided across the room, and drawing aside the heavy window curtains of gray-green silk, stood gazing out on the dark lawn and darker shrubbery.

"I can't see it, of course," she said, "but I know it is there—and, Cosmo, it is beginning to haunt me!"

"Regina, don't get morbid."

"I can't help what I feel. It is no

longer a house out there; it is a tomb—and in it are buried poor little Raneë's life and our good name and all Rex's chances of happiness."

"My dear girl, there is but one alternative: either dismiss Raneë altogether from your thoughts or tear down her house."

"Tear it down? The spot where they were for a time so happy! Raneë's ghost would rise out of the grave to forbid me!"

"I don't like this talk of ghosts and graves, Regina. And if there was any happiness in that house, it was a very short-lived and one-sided affair, and Rex didn't share in it."

And he went to Mrs. Wycherley's side, took the curtain from her hand and drew it over the window, and led her back to her green velvet chair before the fireplace, in which she lay like a lily amid leaves.

Kerrigan coaxed the logs into a brighter blaze. "A fire is to a room what a brook is to a wood," he observed. "Listen, Regina; I have a plan. How would it be to let a little light and air into that shut-up house—to have people come there and lead a commonplace natural life till the horrors that have grown up around it disappear in sunshine and laughter?"

"To rent it, do you mean?" asked Mrs. Wycherley in amazement.

"Yes," said Kerrigan boldly. "Rent it to that young lady I spoke of, and rid the estate of Wych Elms of its one blot—a dreadful, lonely spot, shunned alike by master, mistress and servants."

"Do you really believe," asked Mrs. Wycherley, "that any miracle could ever induce Rex and me to cross that threshold?"

"It would look much better to the world if you did," said Kerrigan calmly.

"Would the girl have the pluck to live there?"

"She has pluck for anything. And of course the death didn't actually occur in the house."

"Have I ever met this girl or heard of her?"

"No; nobody has, and nobody ever will unless you take her up and befriend her. She has only a moderate fortune at present, but it may be considerably augmented. She is modest, educated, entirely presentable; and above all, Rex has called her 'lovely, poetic, Oriental'! And I mean him to marry her; so don't hinder and try to thwart me."

"I won't, Cosmo," said Regina very meekly. "Anything we can do for Rex's happiness—"

"And our own!"

"—shall be done. And here is Rex now, and—"

"Dinner is served," said the butler.

VIII

NURSES wise in the ways of babies aver that one of a pair of twins usually takes unto itself the lion's share of vitality, amiability and general good qualities which ought to be distributed equally between the two, leaving the other only such attributes as must induce pain and failure through life.

Certainly this had been the case of the Wycherley twins, penniless cousins of Rex, who had been brought up at Wych Elms.

The girl, Raneë, was a frail, white little creature, destitute of strength and beauty alike, with a wretched temper and a dull and sluggish mind.

The boy, Kingdon, was an utter stranger to illness, quick and sprightly as Ariel in mind and body, and in person as lovely as a dream child, with his rosy white skin, deep violet eyes, auburn hair that would in time be darkest chestnut, and little slender frame of Mohawk straightness.

The two handsome lads, Rex and Kingdon, were the especial knights of the plain, unattractive little girl, and so unfailing was the devotion of brother and cousin as the years went on that partners in driving, dancing and riding were never lacking to her. But nothing brought even a brief peace or pleasure to the pettish girl with her sullen face and cankered disposition.

Regina never lost heart or patience. "You will see, Rex," she would say confidently. "Our firm, calm influence must tell on her at last. She will be better when she is in her teens—when she is twenty—when she is married"—putting the blissful season of Raneë's improvement farther and farther away, as circumstances demanded.

But at the last suggestion Rex scoffed. He did not believe anyone would ever marry the hatchet-faced little virago. He was mistaken.

When she was twenty—it was by no means sweet and twenty in her case—she suddenly conceived a violent bitterness and resentment against Kingdon, confiding this antipathy to Rex and Regina in a tempest of tears and sobs.

"Poor Don!" said Mrs. Wycherley, at her wits' end to cope with this new manifestation of Raneë's turpitude. "I remember him as such a loving little fellow to you, dear. He used to give you his pennies and pet and fondle you and carry you about."

"Yes, and I hated him because he *could* carry me about!" stormed Raneë. "I think I've always hated him, though I never let myself go till now. Why should he be prettier and stronger than I? The great hulking brute! I hate his red cheeks and white forehead. It is silly for a man to be beautiful. Oh, I wish I could get at him when he is asleep—I'd criss-cross his cheeks with hatpins!"

And the unfortunate girl continued to rave and scream out these unsisterly threats until she fell to the floor in hysterics.

She was put to bed and the doctor was summoned. When he had quieted her he said to Mrs. Wycherley: "This looks more like insanity than anything we have had yet," in a tone of resigned, almost cheerful expectancy.

"I will not give her up yet!" affirmed Regina. "We have not tried everything. Don shall go away for a while."

This seemed a hard fiat, but it was carried out, and the attractive lad of twenty went forth into the world alone—alone, but not penniless—nay, what

is sometimes worse, supplied with plenty of money.

Put a beggar on horseback, and whither will he ride? Don was expected to sojourn quietly in a nearby village until the opening of the college year, which would be his first in the institution. Instead, stung by a sense of cruelty and injustice, he elected to pursue a course more agreeable to himself, and with a perverseness which equaled his sister's, he at once abandoned all idea of ever darkening the college doors.

Later, he wrote home from India; he had already, he declared, learned more in knocking about the world than anyone ever did at a university; they might send him money from time to time in care of a London bank; he had not yet forgiven Raneë, once the dearest creature on earth to him, for her wild caprice in driving him from his home; but if he ever did forgive her he would come back and tell her so.

Apparently the spirit of forgiveness was dilatory in entering his heart, for more than five years had expired since the receipt of this letter, and the exile had neither returned nor written again.

Meanwhile Raneë, in the soft May days following her brother's departure, maintained a tranquil demeanor gradually merging into settled melancholy. One evening at sunset she lay in her little white bed, with all the wild glare gone out of her eyes and the harsh tones from her voice.

"Cousin Regina, I'm going to die," she murmured.

"No, no, darling, not so!" soothed Mrs. Wycherley. "Rex will soon finish at college, and when he is at home to take you out walking and motoring you will soon brighten up."

"Rex!" moaned the girl. "Don't speak of him!"

"Why not?" asked Rex's mother sharply. "Don't tell me, Raneë, that you have taken a senseless dislike to Rex also."

"Oh, no, no; it isn't that!" cried Raneë, hiding her face. "I wish it were only that! But, Cousin Regina,

I love him instead! I don't know when it began, but all my wickedness is transformed into that feeling. It is my salvation. Am I not kinder, gentler than I ever was before? Oh, if Rex could but love me, I should not only be happier than the angels—I should be as good!"

Mrs. Wycherley was stunned. The idea of the suggested alliance filled her with abhorrence, a feeling which Rex, when he was informed, fully shared.

"I will run away and join poor Don!" he declared. "And it's a pity if we are all to be driven from the rooftree by that little vixen! Marry her, indeed! Sit opposite that peevish face, and listen to those snarling tones for fifty years to come, as I have done for fourteen years? I won't—I won't!"

And he did. When he entered Raneë's chamber and saw her, wan as the white lilacs beside her bed, with wistful eyes and trembling lips, a wave of compassion swept over him. Under the light cousinly kiss which he dropped upon her brow her cheeks delicately rosed.

"You know, Rex, I'm going to die," she breathed.

"You shall not die, darling Raneë!" he said firmly and tenderly, and he kissed her again. "You must live—for my sake!"

Her eyes shut; she had fainted from joy.

So they were engaged. In what spirit Rex went to the marriage no one ever knew. The poor little bride really made some effort to retain her new-found gentleness, and would curb her wrath for fear of displeasing Rex; but she soon discovered with her love-sharpened eyes what a sham Rex's attachment to her actually was, and then followed such reproaches and denunciations as drove not only Rex but his mother also nearly to the point of ignominious flight.

When at last Raneë intimated that she would prefer to dwell with Rex in a house of their own, the beleaguered parties hailed the proposition as a flag of truce, and a small and remote portion of the immense grounds was

allotted for the little domicile. Almost primeval wildness reigned in this part of the estate, and at a short distance from the new house was a ravine whose depths were choked with rocks and dead tree trunks and a confusion of vines, while along the little vale wandered a shallow stream. Raneë ordered part of the shrubbery cleared away from the brink of the ravine, and here, at a point where there was a sheer precipice of fifty feet, she would often sit, moody and disconsolate. But in the main her temper was tolerably cheerful and equable during the building of the toy abode.

The novelty of housekeeping soon wore off, and then Raneë's bitterness flared up once more—for the last time, but more wildly than ever. Her jealousy was notorious, and going into society became impossible for the wretched pair.

It ended abruptly and terribly. Raneë was missing from home one day, and it was whispered that she had really gone crazy at last and had fled. But before nightfall they found her lying at the bottom of the ravine, stone dead, not in a huddled heap, but rather as if some one had composed her dress and limbs after her fall; and there were cruel bruises on her arm that could have been made only by the pressure of a man's fingers.

The rumor rushed over the city that Rex Wycherley, goaded past endurance by his wife, had pushed her down to her death. Scareheads in the papers affirmed his guilt in large letters, while he was given the benefit of the doubt in very small ones. He was arrested and sent to jail to await the coroner's inquest; and then it transpired that Raneë had written notes to utter strangers, to the press and to the police, stating that she was in fear of her life, as her husband had repeatedly threatened to murder her.

It was Kerrigan, the dauntless, the invincible, who came to the rescue. How he effected it none but himself could tell; what wires he pulled, what menaces, what proffers of preferment, what gilded bribes he held up to the

individual members of that jury it is impossible to say. But the result was that they did not remand the prisoner for trial; they fully and freely acquitted him.

Scarcely was the verdict given when Kerrigan dashed into a private room and snatched up the telephone.

"Is this Mrs. Wycherley? . . . This is Kerrigan . . . It's all right—all right, Mrs. Wycherley! Your son is free; he will be on the way home in five minutes . . . Not without me? You invite me to come out with your son? . . . Thank you, Mrs. Wycherley . . . What's that? Not Mrs. Wycherley? . . . Oh—not to me? I am not to call you that any more? . . . Oh, yes, I understand! Yes, I'll come with him; I'll come—Regina!"

IX

So all things had been working together for Marco Massie's good, and a place in the world that she wist not of was waiting for her.

The cards of Mrs. and Mr. Wycherley were promptly deposited in the mail box at the door of Leila's and Marco's flat one afternoon during the absence of the young women, and great was their glee upon finding them.

"Oh, Leila! Mr. Kerrigan must have asked her to come? I knew he would be kind, but I did not think he would do the very kindest thing of all first."

"Sacred objects!" said Leila, gazing devoutly at the pasteboards.

"As for me, I shall passepartout my pair and hang them up," declared Marco.

"And I shall put mine in my Tennyson," said Leila, "at this verse of 'In Memoriam':

"Witch elms, that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright,
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore."

On the heels of the call came an invitation, a note from Mrs. Wycherley, gracious but as impossible to decline as a request of royalty—not that the least

idea of declining presented itself to the recipients' minds.

They were relieved of any care as to the ways and means of getting out to Wych Elms by the note's postscript, apparently a careless afterthought: "The car will call for you at two."

"At two, Sunday afternoon," mused Marco. "Tea at five, dinner at seven; we can't leave before ten, and that means eight hours of gorgeous luxury—think of it, Leila!"

"What a blessing we made ourselves those new white *voile* frocks," said Leila—"and that they fit!"

"Oh, they fit well enough," said Marco discontentedly. "They are just our own shapes, as far as that goes, but I want to look higher-shouldered, narrower-backed and shorter-waisted than I really am."

"Oh, nonsense! You are a vastly charming girl," affirmed Leila. "But, of course, nice clothes are like air; if you are supplied, you don't give them a thought—if not, you go wild till you are."

Punctually at the appointed hour arrived the superb motor, and the two girls went down to the curb. They had believed themselves steeled against surprise at the devices of modern magic, but they barely escaped gasping in amaze when the door of the limousine swung open at their approach untouched by any hand, and after their entrance closed itself in the same mysterious way.

"Oh, Leila! Smell the lilies of the valley in the vase!"

"Oh, Marco! I feel I am going to whoop like an Apache!"

"This soundless spinning along, isn't it perfect?"

"Mightn't we be arrested for speeding?"

"I shouldn't mind—it would be part of this wild excitement! Oh, Leila! Isn't it cruel that we shall have to arrive somewhere finally and get out of this beautiful machine?"

A fresh, light snow lay over the landscape, though the sun was now shining in a cloudless sky. Fields and road were dazzling white, and a few

light wreaths hung on the trees—"decorations in our honor," said Leila.

"Yes, the young lord in English novels, coming home after his sojourn in foreign parts, couldn't be any happier than I am," averred Marco, as the car swept into the drive, broader than many a street, which wound in liberal and majestic curves past little dells full of snow and brown uplands waiting the wand of April to gem them with emerald moss and purple violets.

"This is a perfect manor!" cried Marco. "Do you— Oh, do you think there's a paddock?"

"Or a bartizan—or a moat?" laughed Leila. "But here we are!"

The car came to a stand at the main entrance; doors swung open, and Kerrigan was greeting them in a great hall filled with the odors and atmosphere of summer, and was presenting Mr. Wycherley. The visitors' wraps were removed by a maid, and the four entered the long triple drawing-room, at the extremity of which stood Mrs. Wycherley waiting to receive them.

She wore a classic gown of white China crape, hanging in straight folds as if chiseled from marble. A gold fillet banded her brown hair, and from a long gold chain about her neck depended a small oval mirror set in turquoise enamel.

"Will it be possible," thought Marco, "for her to stand there so calm, so like a statue, till we have crossed the rooms to her? Will not this immobility break into fuss and fluttering? Will she be cold or gushing in her greeting?"

She was neither, of course, but displayed as she always did the perfection of good breeding and good feeling. Cordial without the least patronage, genuinely interested in the two little strangers, struck by Marco's great beauty, she soon put them as completely at ease as she was herself.

It was owing to her general command of the situation that she was able in ten minutes to withdraw herself a little from the group, into a tiny bay formed by a fourfold Japanese screen of black and gold, on pretense

of rearranging the ferns and deutzia in a low basket of gold osier.

Here Kerrigan joined her, happy in the sense of detachment.

"*Nous avons trouvé un petit coin*—we have found a little corner," he said. The phrase was a byword between them.

"Cosmo, I really think she will do!"

"You are so fatally sweet and good-natured, Regina, that you like everybody."

"One decided blemish would throw her out, but I cannot perceive any. She is beautiful—and she doesn't talk slang."

"But perhaps she lives it."

"In the daily beholding of her Rex will rejoice."

"She is not the first girl we have thrown in Rex's way, and Cerberus has disdained each individual sop and has gone on barking."

"This treasure trove of yours, Cosmo, must—shall—will make Rex happy."

"But society, Regina! You may be willing to accept this poor and unknown girl—but will Wycherley?"

She looked at him with haughty contempt. "I am Wycherley!" was all she said.

"By Jove, Regina, I believe you are the proudest woman that walks the earth!"

"I believe I am," said Regina, smiling. "But Cosmo, Cosmo, are you trying to warn and to frighten me? Don't you want Rex to marry her? Don't you want—"

Cosmo caught the white hand away from its task of trifling with the ferns and buried his lips in its palm.

"Oh, my love, my queen!" he murmured. "You know I am living for that!"

X

"I AM a very stupid person to take a walk with," lamented Marco. "I haven't any small talk, ready made or spontaneous."

"Well, it's a relief to know beforehand that all this snow will not remind you," said Rex, "to tell me what you

saw at the Winter Palace or in the Alps the last time you were over."

The two young people tripped down the steps of the mansion, glad to be out in the clear air, cold but pledging the spring, glad to be young and handsome and alive and together.

"Perhaps you'd rather drive," suggested Rex. "I have a new dogcart; would you like to try it?"

"All I know about dogcarts," said Marco demurely, "is seeing the poor animals drag them around filled with vegetables from the market gardens."

Rex stared, then laughed. "Your inexperience can hardly be as entire as all that, Marco," he said.

"The depths thereof are cavernous—craterlike! Do not seek to penetrate them," she said, laughing too. "I think I'd rather walk than drive."

"I am at your command."

"Let us go down this path."

"Not that one—any but that."

"What, rebellious already? This is the wildest, most romantic path of all."

"But it is little used; the snow may lie heavy there."

"This and no other," maintained Marco; and they set off down a winding way bordered by hedgerows of sweetbriar, which still bore a few coral haws and exhaled perfume from its thawed stems. Superb trees, their high tops swaying softly in the almost windless air, filled and satisfied the eye with their filigrees and arabesques of twigs against the blue sky, and at every turn a new and charming vista appeared.

"Are you a conversationalist, Marco, or only a talker?"

"Neither," smiled the girl. "I'm a humble learner and listener at the feet of my betters."

"You have none," said Rex promptly.

"I knew you'd say that," said Marco. She reflected. "Of course, I know you didn't mean it. All society men have a stock of such speeches, like a clothing store. And yet I liked your saying it."

"I will rise to the occasion and say

much nicer things, since it pleases you," said Rex.

"Confess, Mr. Wycherley," said Marco seriously, "that you would think better of me if you had not seen me the other night driving about in a wretched hired conveyance alone."

"Why, I never gave the matter a thought," said the young man; "and now that I do, I see no impropriety in your conduct. You doubtless had some good reason."

"I had, indeed," affirmed Marco. "I took that drive to secure an hour's quiet meditation, during which I resolved to seek out Mr. Kerrigan and ask him to help me better my fortunes. And that resolve was fortified by my meeting with you."

"And how did I aid you, all un-awares?"

"Perhaps I imbibed some of your own energy and force."

"That's doubtful."

"Perhaps I merely desired to meet you again," said Marco, laughing and coloring.

"You said you had no pretty speeches."

"But I think," said Marco mischievously, "that I succumbed to the fascination of your attire. I wanted to live in a world where people wear evening dress in the evenings."

"Only my clothes! I'm piqued."

"But such clothes!" ecstatically.

"Don't speak of them in that tone, please; I grow jealous."

"Then, to change the subject, do you know, I have always had an odd fancy? It is to associate the idea of color with the passing day. In my childhood I remember gloomy gray days, sad black ones, humdrum brown ones, with a few of brighter hue. Now today is a white day."

"Really or metaphorically?"

"Both. Thoreau says—he is one of my favorite authors—do you know him?"

"Very well, indeed," said Rex. "Thanks chiefly to Thoreau, a primrose by the river's brim is considerably more to me."

"Well, he remarks that never is

there so much light in the air as on a bright winter afternoon just after a fall of snow. The sky is much the darkest side, like the bluish lining of an egg shell. With this white earth beneath and that spotless skimmed milk sky above, man is but a black speck inclosed in a white egg shell. If Thoreau were with us now he could not have described this present scene more truly."

"And is it," asked Rex, "his reflective passages or his observations on nature that you enjoy the more?"

"The latter," said Marco. "He has opened my eyes to a whole world of beauty which lies about us in various ways—in the lofty reach of these elms, the gnarled sturdiness of the oaks, the dark, unconquered verdure of the evergreens— Oh!"

Her enthusiasm for the works of nature evaporated suddenly as they confronted a very charming work of man, a small *chalet*, fanciful and picturesque to the last degree. It was constructed of cement of a clear apple leaf green, clouded and mottled with white like streakings of foam upon a river. The chimneys were of sage-colored rough stone, and upon the green roof the moss already shone in gold and emerald. Around each of the two panes in all the windows ran a border of jade-colored glass, while the little silk curtains were of chrysoprased tint. Myrtle grew along the foundations; ivy clambered up the walls; firs and hemlock made its setting; and the little silent fountain before it was the rich green of antique bronze.

"What a gem!" cried Marco, breathless.

"That's its name—Green Gem," said Rex.

"I feel like a princess in a fairy tale, finding a cottage in the forest. Is it a summer house—a play house?"

"Rather a storm house," muttered Rex to himself. Then aloud: "You must have heard of it; this is the house poor little Raneë built. I—I have not been here for a year or two."

"Oh, forgive me! I made you come—you tried not to!"

"Never mind; perhaps it is a good omen. But I suffered much here. It is very painful—the accusation, the suspicion—intolerable!"

Marco dared not look at him, his voice was shaking so. It seemed impossible that this was the wealthy, the envied Rex Wycherley.

"Will you come a little farther?" he asked, grown calmer after a moment's pause; and he led her on through the tangled shrubbery and past bowlders and snowdrifts and fallen trees, till they came to the brink of the chasm.

"It was here," Rex went on. "This is 'Raneë's Rock,' where she used to sit and brood, weeping, weeping. Poor Raneë! And then some dastard broke in upon her loneliness and flung that little weak girl down there—think of it, Marco! And the whole world believes that I am that man!"

He breathed hard; his voice shook again. Marco was trembling, too. She looked up and down the little glen; then she said coolly:

"I thought you were such a good Socialist, Mr. Wycherley!"

"What? Oh, yes—yes, I am a Socialist—I try to be; do you find me inconsistent?"

"Yes, very," said Marco firmly. "It's so easy for me to see what you ought to do with this place; I saw at the first glance."

"Well, what?"

"You ought not to shut it away from humanity just because one death occurred here," the girl went on bravely. "Clear it out and cut down the brush and make little bridges and hew steps in the rocks, and give it to the city for a park."

A slow flush mounted into his face. She did not know whether he was offended or pleased. At last he said quietly:

"I thank you for the suggestion. It had not occurred to any of us. I will—I will consider it."

And it seemed to them both as they walked back to the mansion that a faint winking star of hope led the way.

At dinner, which was all a delicious

dream of white roses and wine in slender, long-stemmed glasses etched with gold and shining crystal and silver and damask, Marco roused as if from a trance to hear Kerrigan saying:

"The worst of it was that Vagan's famous old ring was annihilated with the men."

"We had an odd ring made here for Kingdon when he went away," remarked Regina, "really quite a feat for Wycherley craftsmen. We gave it to him at the station as we said good-bye. It was of copper, three intertwined crowns inclosing a Lake Superior carnelian, on which was engraved the word '*Reviens*.' We chose '*Reviens*' instead of '*Return*' because of its tenderness. The '*R*' was made large to stand for Rex, Rancee and Regina. The three crowns also signified our names—you know, Mrs. Robideaux, every Wycherley is named king or queen in some language. My husband's name was Raja, and his father's was Roi."

And then again the conversation was lost upon Marco, in her delight at finding that the tiny gold goblets, no bigger than acorn cups, filled with syrup of violets, at her plate and Leila's, were to be their souvenirs of the occasion.

At home, Marco said: "A white day, Leila, even to the roses and the three dresses!"

"Yes—but I felt like Paulina in '*The Winter's Tale*'—you four were pared off, but I thought:

"I, an old turtle,
Will wing me to some withered bough, and
there
My mate, that's never to be found again,
Lament till I am lost."

"How funny for a woman to call herself a turtle!" said Marco.

"Turtle dove, she meant, goosie!"

"Oh!"

XI

"If Mr. Kerrigan disappoints me, after all," said Marco, lifting her white, strained face from the spicy depths of a

box of carnations, "I shall drown myself, simply drown myself!"

"Simply, indeed!" said Leila. "Do not wrinkle your brows so—the youngest skin will not endure it. Does this look like disappointing you?" she asked, taking out the great crinkly crimson blossoms from the waxy tissue wrappings.

"Can they uphold my hopes thus and then dash them to destruction? Can they be so cruel?"

"No, they cannot; it's not in human nature—at least, not in theirs."

"I have heard of people doing much worse things," said Marco gloomily. "I once saw a geranium that was trying to grow in a cellar; it was bleached snow white. I have been like that."

"And now you desire to be 'a laughing rose, and joyous in the sun,'" quoted Leila. "But, Marco, you are trying to get the frosting without the cake, as Joshua Craig says. You won't go on studying the subjects which thoughtful people care for."

"I am willing to take riding lessons," said Marco. "I don't know the difference between a pommel and a postern."

"You should try to learn something of political economy and Socialism, since they interest Mr. Wycherley."

Marco shook her head, laughing. "It's me for the frivols and follies of life," she declared. "They say Carlyle did not understand the human race, only the individual. Well, I understand neither the one nor the other. The only atom of humanity I care anything about is myself."

"What—not even your pupils in school?"

"Oh, honor binds me to do everything in my power for them. I must not, will not, let my class drop below the average just because of my selfish hopes and fears."

"Well, you're not such a bad atom, after all. There's the siren down in the street; no more speculations and study for us today, I suppose."

And, indeed, there were not many days during April and May when the two young women did not receive

some token of their new friends' consideration, flowers or fruit or a new book or an invitation from the Wycherleys to motor, wild notes and messages from Kerrigan to the effect that Coagulated Rubber was going down and Decussated Platinum was going up.

They liked the motor drives best, in Rex's great uncovered six-cylinder car which he drove himself, though at first they were amazed and a good deal disconcerted to learn that the story of Rex never riding with an empty seat in his machine was literally true.

"Could I spin past a poor old man carrying home his shovel and pick and pail, and perhaps limping from rheumatism in the bargain and not snatch him up and set him down at his door?" said Rex hotly. "Instead of scorching on the road, I should scorch inwardly with shame if I did such a thing!"

"But doesn't it often take you out of your way?"

"Well, what's five or ten minutes or miles to an auto? Besides, I have no business on earth except these little services, and, pending the time when the public shall own the street cars and use them just as they now use the sidewalks, without paying a penny, I'll continue to give as many men a lift as I can," declared Rex.

"I don't mind the women and bundles of sewing and washing," protested Marco, "but, really, the fish baskets—"

"I will get you a gold vinaigrette," said Kerrigan.

"You can put all your finery on your heads," said Rex calmly, "red and blue veils, if you like, and get some tweed coats that fish and oil won't hurt."

"I love to pile three or four children into the tonneau, even if they are dirty," said Leila. "And besides, Marco, you can always sit on the front seat beside Mr. Wycherley."

"No, she shall not," averred Rex stoutly. "She shall take her share of whatever is going. Why should she be exempt from temporary discomfort? Can she not bear for a few moments

what her brothers and sisters have to cope with all day long?"

But for all his fierce speaking, Marco had the front seat three fourths of the time, as they rolled noiselessly along the roads bordered with the soft pink and green of apple and peach bloom, and sweet with the odor of flowering currents and hawthorn, while cherry trees sprinkled confetti over the car.

And there was one important and epoch making trip to the neighboring city of Leviness, when Rex was a delegate and the three ladies spectators in the State convention, where Kerrigan's party, amid tremendous enthusiasm, made him its nominee for Governor.

Marco had called the first day she spent at Wych Elms a white day. At last came a day which ever seemed to her draped in vestments of royal purple, so splendid were the tidings it brought her.

She was summoned to attend at the office of Mr. Kerrigan after school had closed.

"To be given my death warrant—or a patent of nobility?" she asked herself.

For she felt that she could not continue to remain a hanger-on at the Wycherley's, a little sister of the rich, with nothing of her own to back up her position. No, she must withdraw from the association, resent their patronage, close the bright pages, unless Lixivated Loam had gone up dizzily and deliciously!

She detected a new deference in the clerk who ushered her into the chief's august presence; and the chief himself was smiling kindly as she came in.

"Well, this is the sibylline leaf of your destiny!" he cried, waving a slip of paper. "How if I have to report disaster?"

"I should bear it pluckily," she said. "But it's easy to say so, when I see from your manner there's no occasion for heroics."

"No, indeed; there's need only for congratulations. The six hundred dollars is many, many times multiplied."

"It's magical—it's like Aladdin's lamp!" laughed Marco, clapping her hands. She would have liked to kiss Kerrigan in her excited gratitude, but the idea did not appear to occur to him.

"And now the question is, what are we to do with all this money?"

"Why, first of all," said Marco, "you must take out your percentage, your broker's commission, or whatever it is."

"All right," said Kerrigan, smiling at her prompt honesty. Many girls would not have thought first of his dues. "And shall I go on investing for you?" he inquired.

"Do you think you need to use it all?" asked Marco wistfully. "I'm so tired of merely existing; I don't want to wait any longer to begin to live!"

Kerrigan laughed. "I expected that reply," he said, "and merely wished to see how you would word it. Of course you must resign your position in the school at once."

"What—allow someone else to finish my year's work—give up now, in the middle of May? There's no teacher I would trust to bring some of those boys and girls through their examinations."

"But you hate children, Marco. I've heard you say so twenty times."

"But these are my own scholars, that I've worked with and worked over for nearly a year. A year is not a little thing, it is a great thing; and I pledged myself to give it to these particular children. I'll stand by my word. I hate enforced labor, and God grant I need never do any more of it—but I'll see my class through."

"You're a brick!" said Kerrigan.

"What's more," said Marco, warming as she spoke, "if my being rich depended on my shirking in this school matter and playing false to the obligation I was so thankful to assume a few years ago, I'd say: 'Keep your money—it costs too much; I'd rather stay square!'"

"Jove, I believe you would!" said Kerrigan, delighting in her uprightness. "But have you thought where you will reside?"

"No, I haven't dared."

"Then, you are hereby offered the tenancy of Green Gem, the little house built for Ranee Wycherley."

"To *live* there, do you mean? Leila and I?" gasped Marco. "It would be paradise!"

"Far from it," smiled Kerrigan. "You'll have to put up with great inconveniences. There's no wine cellar, no guest chamber, no stables, no garage, room for only one servant. In the face of these drawbacks perhaps you'll refuse."

"Refuse!" began the girl, and checked herself. "But why should they grant such a favor to me, a stranger?"

"Oh, the kindness isn't all on their side. They have grown to dislike the idea of that silent, tomblike emptiness on their grounds. And, pretty and new as it is, people say the house is haunted; but of course that's nonsense. Ranee did not die there, nor did she lie in death at Green Gem; her funeral was from the great house. Will you take it, Marco?"

"Of course, a thousand times yes! Oh, what can I ever say or do to thank you?"

"Only continue to be square," lectured Kerrigan, "and you will adorn the station in life to which it has pleased, not Providence, but Cosmo Kerrigan, to call you."

"I will be, oh, so good, so much better than I have ever been!" promised Marco with tears of joy in her eyes.

And then she caught up the telephone, and first told Leila the grand news, then ordered dinner for five at the Hotel Tuscarora, with red roses and champagne and the Louis Quinze dining room; then she bade Rex and Regina to the feast, and hanging up the receiver, invited Cosmo also.

"And there's one thing more I must do," she said softly. "Will you have a taxi called?"

"My coupé is waiting; it is at your service."

"No, thank you; it's a quite private errand, and rather a long way," said

Marco. "Don't be late at my dinner; we shall be very gay!"

But seconds before, even as she spoke the words "quite private," he had touched an unseen button on his desk, thus putting into motion the machinery which would trace her actions for him. He had no curiosity; but it was his business to know all that concerned Marco Massie.

As he was dressing, the telephone rang.

"To the florist's—yes? . . . And bought a lot of white flowers—yes? . . . To St. Vincent's cemetery! And put the flowers on two graves! . . . The—what? . . . Oh, the names on the stones! Andrew Massie—Celia Massie! . . . Then she went home. Very well!"

After the merry little dinner, with its toasts and congratulations—Leila's toast had been "To the Absent!"—was finished, Kerrigan said quietly to Marco:

"My dear girl, I know, and I only, why you have chosen to wear two white carnations in your hair this evening. One is for your father, and one is for your mother; isn't it so?"

"Why, yes. But how did you ever guess?"

"A very beautiful sentiment, dear child," said Kerrigan, and departed, leaving Marco touched and dazzled by his delicate perspicacity.

XII

ANOTHER month glided away. May had transformed the grounds of Wych Elms into a tangle of greenery, and now June was here, adding the glory of roses to the earth, and fanning it with zephyrs yet softer and more seductive than those of her elder sisters.

School closed, and the class of the "heiress teacher," as the papers called Marco, attained a creditable standing. The two friends gave up their apartment, partitioned their household effects among several humble homes, and were off to their new abode.

Green Gem was a thousand times prettier amid the June foliage than it had been in the March day of Marco's first and only other visit. As for Leila, she had never seen her future home at all, and sat dumb with delight as they came in view of the little toy house. In the mossed fountain basin stood a bronze Silenus; his smile was wicked, but still it was a smile, and no misgivings as to the future assailed the two young women.

The door opened, and the prettiest of maids stood on the threshold. Her little ruffy apron was white, and her dress and cap a clear light green; she looked like a woodland fairy. Marco nodded and smiled at her.

"And you are—"

"Verna," said the girl softly. "Mrs. Wycherley engaged and instructed me. I am to bid you welcome in her name."

"She is very kind," said Marco, not letting her first word to her servant be one of thanks, and they entered the house.

It was built in the shape of an inverted "T," and contained on the ground floor a tiny vestibule and three rooms, each of which had an exposure on three sides, every window looking into the fluttering gold and green of young leafage.

The dining room was filled with the warm hues of maroon leather, antique oak and glinting brass, which multiplied the sparkles of the sunlight. Crystal and silver shone on the sideboard, and two yellow canaries were singing.

The parlor was more like a dainty jewel casket than a room, its creamy walls covered by interlacing lilacs and forget-me-nots, great clusters of the same melting in tenderest azure, lavender and rose on the soft white ground of the carpet. Aquarelles and pastels, white and gold chairs of palest brocade, tiny Dresden statuettes and airy lace curtains preserved the delicate harmony of the small *salon*.

Upstairs were two chambers where fancy had run riot. In one, golden griffins festooned full, soft curtains of pink and amber silk away from a

golden lace-decked bed; rugs of white fur nearly covered the rich crimson carpet; rosewood furniture, pink candles and shades and a golden lamp carried out the sensuous color scheme of rose, yellow and white.

The other chamber was Oriental in effect, dark walls and draperies, Persian rugs, hanging lamps of colored glass, heavy perfumes of sandal and myrrh, a confusion of silken cushions and trailing coverlets. On little inlaid tables stood a black and gold coffee service, small lacquered idols, carved ivories, strings of agates, strips of embroidery. The bed was a wide couch swathed in rich, loose fabrics and heaped with velvet pillows.

The bathroom was a miracle of coquetry. The ceiling was a melting blue, with soft blurs of pearly clouds. The walls were vast mirrors lightly painted with foliage, merging halfway down into reeds and irises, the latter bearing a few purple and white blooms. Even the door was a mirror similarly painted, so that the fair bather once inclosed seemed to herself to be in a charming sylvan glade.

When Leila and Marco had finished their inspection they gazed at each other wordless. The whole tragedy was told so plainly in those rooms, the piteous, horrible story of a plain woman longing and struggling for love and romance and beauty.

"She had ideas, that one," said Leila in a low voice.

"Yes; she must have suffered awfully," murmured Marco. It seemed impossible to speak Ranee's name, a sacrilege to be there in those precincts so long held for her sake away from observation.

They fell silent again, till Leila made a determined effort to fling off a certain feeling of dread.

"Let us name the two bedrooms, Marco," she said brightly. "Will you sleep in France tonight, or in the mysterious, gorgeous Far East? For my part, I feel I can write in either room, can write better than I ever did before."

"I don't know," said Marco slowly.

"I am conscious—of something in these rooms—not altogether pleasing."

"Catch her!" cried Leila, and as Marco crumpled and swayed forward, the arms of Verna and Leila clamped about her and they laid the unconscious form on the couch.

"Bring some water—then wine!" ordered Leila, and the frightened maid obeyed. They flung open the windows; the cool air rushed in, and presently Marco opened her eyes.

"You're better, dearie? Oh, I'm thankful!"

"Did I faint?"

"Yes, indeed! It was this stifling incense—we will have no more of it. Never," she said to Verna, "never burn any more joss sticks or pastilles; Miss Massie, you see, cannot endure them."

"Why, I haven't burned anything!" declared Verna, surprised.

"It wasn't that," said Marco gravely. "You may go, Verna. Leila, darling, it's worse than that. I think she—Ranee—I think Ranee doesn't like me to be here in her house—in her very sleeping room!"

"Marco! What madness is this?"

"I know she was here, Leila! I felt her snatch at my heart—she almost got it out of my body. Next time, perhaps—"

"Drink this," commanded Leila, and even as Marco drank the tanging wine the color crept back to lips and cheeks and light to the eyes.

A tap at the door startled them anew. It was only Verna.

"Mr. Kerrigan said Miss Massie was to receive this as soon as she arrived," said the girl.

"This" was a small elegant dressing case of Russia leather containing a score of cut glass, gold-topped flasks, boxes and brushes, with Kerrigan's card.

"How weary the engraver must have grown of your initials!" said Leila, finding them repeated, large or small, upon every piece.

"But what a sense of realness they give the whole thing!" cried Marco, seeking out and fondly dwelling upon

every letter. She seemed to have forgotten and cast off any disagreeable impression, and was in the best of spirits as she sat down at the little marquetry desk to acknowledge Cosmo's magnificent gift, finding ready to her hand the prettiest stationery of watered green and white, with "Green Gem" stamped in gold on sheets and envelopes.

But when the gay day of unpacking and rearranging, of discoveries and praise and exulting was over, a quaking hand rapped on the bathroom door.

"Push it open," said Leila. "It isn't locked—I don't know that it will lock; how can you lock a door that is made of glass?"

Leila, wrapped in a gray dressing gown, looked up. A strange terror, seeming to emanate from Marco's silent figure as she stood in the door, penetrated her and struck a chill to her very marrow.

"Marco! What's the matter?" she cried, springing to her feet.

"There's a woman in my room," Marco just managed to breathe.

"You mean Verna?"

"No, not Verna. She's on the couch, all huddled up. I took the slumber robes and cushions away to arrange the bed for the night, and when I turned back she was there."

"Have you switched on the lights?"

"Yes, but it isn't very light—the ruby glass is so thick."

"We'll go in, anyway," said Leila stoutly, pulling on her slippers. "Or no—you stay here; I'll solve the riddle alone."

She went, and in a moment Marco heard her laughing. "It's nothing at all, dear," she called. "You couldn't have taken everything off the couch as you thought; there was a length or so of tapestry and a couple of cushions heaped together in a—in a very funny way, that's all. But I'll sleep here tonight, and you sleep in France, which is more cheerful."

"Oh, no, Leila; let's sleep together as we've always done," begged Marco.

But in the quiet dark Marco spoke again:

"Leila!"

"Yes?"

"There's always a fly in the ointment, isn't there?"

"What is it you mean?"

"I mean—how bad it will be, now that we have this lovely house and the friends and the money, if I am to be pursued by someone from beyond the grave!"

XIII

ONE thing Rex Wycherley had clearly perceived from the moment Kerrigan broached the project of Marco's taking up her residence at Green Gem—that in the event of her doing so his opportunities of seeing her would be much curtailed, and his pleasant intercourse with her sadly restricted, if not wholly terminated. It would be in the worst possible taste for him to visit Marco in the house which had been his wife's. Painful as the sacrifice would be, Rex felt that his proper course would be to give Marco up.

In consequence of these austere conclusions, it was not until nine o'clock of the morning after the girls' arrival at Green Gem that Rex paid his respects. Verna admitted him to the cheerful little dining room; Marco poured a cup of coffee for him, and Leila rattled on in a torrent of words so that he might not have time to be embarrassed.

"Oh, I'm going to be so much more literary than I have ever been before!" declared Leila. "I shall either hire a press agent or find some means of getting my name into all the papers myself."

"Do you call that being literary?"

"It's a means to an end; when the papers have got into the habit of talking about me they will make no end of fuss about my next book. It's to be named 'The Topaz and the Traitor,' and so I intend to call myself the Topaz Lady all this summer. I'll wear yellow gowns and hats, and topaz hatpins and brooches and beads; and then they'll say there is some

mysterious connection between the authoress and her heroine."

"But won't they also say," demurred Marco, "that it is plain that the chief character, the Traitor, was drawn from—"

"From Louis? I don't care; I hope they will," said Leila vindictively. "I'll make him just as mean and hateful in the book as he is in real life—and perhaps he'll read it in Moscow, or wherever he is, and come back to convince me that he isn't so black as he is painted."

"Oh, I hope he won't do that!" cried Marco. "You're so piquant and interesting as you are, Leila. You're not placid and bovine like a contented wife, nor anxious like a spinster, nor sad like a widow. You're dazzling with expectancy, refined with regret, quivering and flashing like a wire-set diamond!"

"Well, I must go now and steep the Traitor deeper in infamy," said Leila. "Each of us has only so much force to express each day; if it evaporates in conversation it can't be chained down by pen and paper."

"You set an example of industry to us all," said Rex, as she vanished. "And you, Marco, what are your plans for the summer?"

"Why, it's vacation for me."

Rex shook his head. "No, there's no vacation for anyone nowadays. Work flows toward idle hands, and your work is already cut out for you. 'To your quilting, girls, to your quilting,' as Elbert Hubbard says."

Marco looked at him, puzzled. "What is my work?" she asked meekly.

"Let us go out for a little walk," said Rex. "I can explain your position and duties more easily upon the scene of your future labors."

She laughed and caught up a pink parasol, and they went outdoors. She nodded a greeting to the bronze Silenus, and paused to drop a few crumbs to the gold fish flickering about in the basin of the fountain; then they strolled onward into a tangled path overgrown with sweetbriar, and Marco paused.

"How kind of you to remember!" she said softly. "It was down this path that I insisted on coming that first day, wasn't it? But I can remember, and can be kind, too—and I won't ask you—won't allow you to go this way today."

"But we must," said Rex quietly. "You don't understand—but, Marco, your summer's work lies at the end of this walk."

And then he explained how he had been thinking for weeks and months over her suggestion that the ravine be turned into a public recreation ground, and that at last he had decided to act upon the idea.

"And first I wish to engage you as superintendent of the work—"

"Me?"

"—at a fair salary—"

"Salary?"

"—to plan the place, to name it, to consult with landscape architects, to hire workmen, pay them, settle strikes, overcome all difficulties."

"But can I?" cried Marco, her eyes sparkling. "Do I know enough? Am I sufficiently in earnest, sufficiently a woman and not a butterfly to do this thing?"

Rex might have answered, had he been quite frank: "That's just what I wish to find out." He went on gently: "I couldn't let a stranger take hold of it—any person without sympathy or understanding. The place has been sacred to us, full of sorrow, full of terror and shame. It has been set apart from men; and that was wrong in me, who believe every man should have his own rood of ground. But you, Marco, will give it back to men."

In spite of himself he could not keep the thrill out of his voice, and by an instinct of flight Marco said quickly:

"But I don't belong to any union, and perhaps that will be the first of our industrial troubles."

"Well, perhaps you can join one—why not?"

"Wouldn't it be nice to make a Japanese garden—a tea house, little red archy bridges, everything odd and fanciful?"

"Yes," agreed Rex.

"Or, better, the Colonial style—hedges of box—it smells so sweet—a sundial, all the old-fashioned flowers, all quaint and formal."

"Excellent!"

"Or rather, keep close to nature, leave the place as it is so far as possible, only damming the stream to make a wading pool, with skating in the winter."

"Best of all!"

"Would it be deep enough for boats?"

"You must ask your engineers."

"And there must be a house—a good one, that won't burn, for people to rest in."

"Yes, I know," said Rex. "I've thought of that." He had not meant to speak—no, not yet—but Marco's eyes were dancing with happy excitement; a tendril of hair was caressing her cheek—and he was truly lonely. "Yes, they will need a house, certainly. But one is ready. More plainly and substantially furnished, Green Gem will fulfill all requirements."

"Green Gem?" repeated Marco incredulously, turning on him a wild glance of pain and entreaty. "But that will be robbing Peter to pay Paul! It is my home, my dear home already—and you would take it from me?" Tears choked her utterance.

"Ah, Marco, Marco, don't you see"—he disengaged the pink parasol gently from her grasp and let it fall upon the sward, while he clasped her hands and drew her nearer—"don't you see that by another summer Green Gem will be too far away—"

"Too far away?"

"From me." Their eyes locked, longing in his, tears in hers; and then her head was on his breast and his arms enfolded her, and he was kissing her soft cheek and the loosened hair. And so was their betrothal made.

XIV

"LADY, my name is Cyno."

"Oh, indeed!" said Miss Massie, director of the improvements in Wy-

erley Glen. "Your name is Cyno," she repeated slowly, "and your nationality is—"

"Lady, I am a Greek."

Greek! He had uttered, thought Marco, the grandest word human lips could frame, and he was a gentle, winning, refined youth, as he stood gazing wistfully at her, bareheaded, having deferentially removed his little red cap from his black curls; yet he was requesting at her hand the privilege of working among the other laborers who were attacking the tangle of debris and decay in the ravine.

Three days had passed since Rex had shown her her kingdom, and she had lost no time in beginning her summer's task. She had not yet decided on any scheme of treatment for the glen, but no harm could result from clearing the decks for action. One by one she had hired a few workmen, arranging wages and transportation with them in a cool businesslike way; but now one had presented himself who arrested her attention and curiously appealed to the imagination, and she could not at once either dismiss or retain him.

Yes, for three days Marco had been that enviable creature, an engaged girl. All her little world was at her feet. She could scarcely credit the complete satisfaction Mrs. Wycherley professed, not knowing that lady's secret reason for promoting her son's marriage; while Kerrigan's congratulations were even warmer. As for Leila, she averred she could talk forever on the theme of Marco's conquest, her duties, prospects, shortcomings, general unworthiness and extraordinary good luck.

"What can he see in you, Marco? You haven't any heart or any brains. It must be the beauty—yes, poor moth-man, he is dazzled and captured by the same silly flares that ruined Antony and Leander and—and Balzac!"

"I shan't ruin Rex," said Marco calmly. "Look how I am going to help him. This park project will lift him out of his melancholy and inactivity. I am to do the work, or rather watch it, in the mornings, while

he is to go on with his book, 'A Cup of Cold Water.' Only think, Leila, he has never cared or dared to write a word on the manuscript since Raneë's death and his disgrace."

"Yes, I know what it is, that coming up against a dead wall when you're writing, and not being able to tack on another word," said Leila. "A very little thing will do it—for instance, if a girl with a better complexion than mine should happen to pass my window I should be held up for hours."

"There isn't any such girl," declared Marco. "But oh, Leila, kiss me and bless me, and don't scold, because, indeed, I don't know that my heart's really is, and it may come to nothing, or be a great mistake if it goes on."

So Leila kissed and petted her as usual, and vowed it was much better to begin marriage with moderation and respect than with volcanoes and torrents and earthquakes of adoration, as she and Louis had done, only to find themselves very shortly thereafter seated amid the ashes of desolation.

And now, three days later, what could it be, Marco asked herself, that brought back to her memory a snatch of Leila's speech? "Volcanoes—torrents—earthquakes!" What was it in the aspect of the lad Cyno that recalled this tumultuous trio of words?

It was too ridiculous! She must brace herself, and quickly, against this rushing tide of new impressions.

"Do you really wish to work—at just this sort of work?" asked Marco quietly. She had heard a great deal about the dignity of labor and the equal worth of all sincere effort, but it seemed utterly incongruous to think of this young Apollo tanning his clear olive skin, cracking his sinews and deforming his delicate hands in the hard and humble tasks of hauling and ditching.

"Do I wish it? Ah, what I wish—" He paused, seeming to hold himself in leash, then suddenly burst out: "Ah, I will say it if I die for it! I wish that I might be in my own land again, 'where burning Sappho loved and sung,'

reclining on a marble terrace at the feet of a beautiful maiden—like you, lady, yes, like you! She should be wearing a gauzy robe of crocus hue, with a gold fillet across her night dark tresses, and I should be reading aloud to her some story of the old gods and goddesses; and she and I would be as they for happiness and youth and power. And at last we would cease from reading and look out upon the blue and silver water and ask each other if the sea is ever wine-colored, as Homer calls it. And we should see that he spoke the truth, for to those who love perfectly all fairest vistas are vouchsafed!"

Marco's heart gave a great wild leap, and Browning's words—"love—the only good in the world"—flashed at her.

"Oh, no, no, never! I will not—I will not!" was her inward cry. "But Cyno, Cyno! Your eyes are the wine-colored sea, and I am drowning there!"

Aloud she said coldly: "You said, Cyno, 'I will say what I wish though I die for it.' What did you mean by that? There is nothing in your drawing a pretty picture of your fatherland to cause any danger of your dying."

"Ah, but there is!" Cyno cried eagerly. "Lady, you do not comprehend. I thought: 'If I speak, she will be offended and will not give me work, but will drive me away; and that will be the last on this earth of Cyno.' See, lady!"

He drew from his blouse a square of flame-colored silk knotted by the corners, untied it, and revealed three or four gold and silver coins, a few fine little shells and agates and an oblong of printed paper.

"Read, lady."

"It is a ticket," said Marco, "a railroad ticket to—Niagara Falls!"

"Yes—to that home, that haven for the soulsick and despairing! If you had turned me away—if you do still turn me away, there shall I go for the one mad plunge and then the long rest! But you will not condemn me—you will not refuse me a few summer hours in the sunlight of your

presence! Let me stay—oh, for the sake of all who have ever loved, for the sake of the heartbroken Sappho herself, let me stay!”

Marco, controlling her rising agitation by a great effort, withdrew her eyes from those of the youth and considered with herself for a moment. Surely experiences and adventures were coming to her at last, after so many colorless, uneventful years—were crowding almost too close upon each other's heels!

“How came you to know of this place and this work?” asked Marco calmly.

“Lady, who does not know of it? American cities have few secrets from the newspapers. But with me it is different. I had seen you, had wished to be near you, long before the world was aware of your perfection. For months, yes, even for years, I have watched from behind the piles of golden oranges and citron in my little stall to see you trip by on the way to your work in the school; and it seemed then not so impossible that a humble vender of fruit might some time hope to touch the heart of one who was herself, however beautiful, only a working woman.”

Marco listened as if she were in a theater, as if there were no personal application in the young Greek's words. She forbade the shades of Propriety and Prudence to emerge from the background of her consciousness.

“But of late you have only passed in the sumptuous machines of gold and iron, and I perceived that you were immeasurably removed from me. But sometimes Mr. Wycherley has stopped the car on my corner and has purchased apples or lemons for his brothers, as he calls those poor beneficiaries; and then—then, oh, lady, you must have felt my eyes dwelling upon you, must have trembled in the outrush and reflex of forces so vital, so intense! Ah, do not tell me that such devotion did not touch you at all! Did you not know, or guess? Can you not even remember my face?”

“No,” said Marco gently, “I don't

remember you at all; I certainly never saw you till now.”

“But I may stay? I may work for you, work with you?” The words were a gasp of eagerness.

Marco did not answer.

“Lady—” he said softly, and at the deep, subdued and mournful voice the girl thrilled, as in a dim cathedral some indifferent and callous heart quivers beneath the searching organ tones. “Lady,” he went on, “the bubbles on that stream, that meet but to break and part, are companions almost as long as you and I shall be. You have a happy sheltered future; I must go into outer darkness and loneliness. Give me a few bright memories to carry with me. The world is such a big, waste desert to me—if my path lies along the grass and shade of yours for a mile or so, don't push me off!”

While he spoke, the girl's head, her arms, her whole body crept imperceptibly farther and farther away from him; when he had finished she stood with averted face and interlocked fingers, utterly thunderstruck at the strange power of his words. Then she flung off the obsession and faced him bravely enough.

“I see no objection whatever to your working here,” she said simply. “Only it must be thoroughly understood that you are never to speak to me again as you have spoken this morning.”

“Never, lady,” said the youth meekly, “never will I so address you again.”

“And do not call me ‘lady’—it is not the custom; it irritates me, flatters me. Call me ‘Miss Massie.’”

XV

AND now began for Marco Massie a period of perfect bliss. Nothing lacked which could enhance happiness; every spiritual and material need of her nature was met and filled; and the new desires which continually arose were as continually satisfied. No hour of each day was less perfect than its

fellows. All was charming; it was sweet to wake, to rise, to bathe and dress, to eat and drink, to drive and talk with Rex, to accept his tender and restrained caresses; it was sweet to read, to dream, to work.

For Marco was working through the glorious mornings in the glen, directing, discussing, deciding upon all the points which went to the making of a wild and dank jungle into a comfortable park.

She dared not ask herself how important an ingredient in her brew of pleasure was the silent homage of the lad Cyno. Always following her about like a shadow, ready ever with a strong hand or helpful suggestion, he never violated their understanding. But she felt in every fiber what lay behind his tragic eyes.

Sometimes when he was not gazing at her she would look at him and study the lithe, arrowy lightness of shape, the fine, slim hands and feet, the sculptural head with its thick, soft, black curls, and she would say:

"He is no peasant, but an aristocrat. Poor though he is, a queen might be proud of his admiration."

And she would please herself by tracing back in fancy the line from which he sprang, through fishers and corsairs and warriors to some great royal hero of Grecian story.

The episode of Cyno, however, was destined to be of short duration. For three weeks the two young creatures hovered about each other, timid, fascinated; and then the inevitable occurred; the flood gates of youth were unloosed; the barrier between them was broken down.

Marco, attended by Cyno, was skirting the upper edge of the ravine with a view to determining for herself the exact places where parapets and bulwarks would be required. She believed that the engineers in charge had been too free in allotting these expensive and disfiguring additions to the park, and she meant to have only as many as were absolutely essential to safety.

"For instance, Cyno," said Marco,

consulting a paper, "the specifications call for a wall of masonry just here. But this place is safe enough," and she stamped her foot a little to demonstrate her security. "No one could ever fall or slip—"

She stopped and turned white—the ground was moving beneath her feet. With the quickness of a panther's claw Cyno's right hand plucked at her skirts and twisted into the cloth, while his left arm wound itself about a young maple sapling that bowed with the sudden burden.

"Cling to me—cling to me for your life!" cried Cyno; and Marco flung her arms about his neck and interlaced her fingers, while a great mass of earth, roots and rocks detached itself beneath them and hurtled down the slope. How tiny seemed the bending sapling, how weak the human muscles! But they held firm; and after a moment the two embracing figures inched upward, slowly, slowly creeping into safety, and dropped exhausted on the grass in a covert of laughing leaves.

"Oh! Have we fallen? Where are we?" panted Marco, opening her eyes.

"We are in heaven," breathed Cyno against her cheek.

The color came rushing back to her face. "Oh, I must rise! Let me go!" she gasped.

"No! Not yet! Let me have this moment, this one moment out of all your life! Besides, you are too shaken to stand."

"I hear the people shouting and running."

"They are afraid for us. You are not hurt; but I am hurt to death."

"Oh, no! Cyno, Cyno!"

"May I kiss you, lady?"

"Oh, poor boy, why not?"

"Why not, truly—since while earth spins this hour can never come again! My love, my love!"

When that rose of fire had faded and Marco looked once more on everyday existence, she was surrounded by an anxious group of workpeople, exclaiming over her escape and her torn and earth-stained frock, while they com-

mented in asides upon the strange coincidence that Mr. Wycherley's "intended" should have so nearly lost her life in the very place where his wife did actually lose hers.

Cyno had disappeared.

Marco was too agitated to remain at her post that day, and the night's slumbers were broken by dreams of avalanches and other terrible disasters by land and sea, while all her waking moments were filled with blushing confusion as to how she could ever meet Cyno calmly with the memory of that kiss between them.

As events proved, she was not called upon to meet him at all. He had slipped away as quietly as he came, without a word to his fellow workmen, and without drawing his pay; nor could discreet inquiries at the different Greek fruit stands in the city elicit any information.

Ten days elapsed, and then the closing word of the lad's hopeless romance reached Marco. A small registered package came to her by mail, and when she had signed for it she opened it in the seclusion of her chamber. There fell upon her lap a knotted handkerchief of flame-colored silk, heavy with golden coins, agates and rosy shells. Marco sat staring at these objects a moment, then with trembling fingers took up the letter which accompanied them.

It was an official document, type-written, with a printed heading, "Department of Police, Niagara Falls, New York." It informed her that a man who had been seen to commit suicide by leaping into the cataract at its brink had left upon the bank the inclosed effects, with a note requesting that they be sent to Miss Massie, of Green Gem, at Wych Elms, Wycherley. There was no clue to the identity of the suicide, but the spectators of the rash act said that he was young and wore a red cap. Should the body be recovered, Miss Massie would be instantly apprised of the fact; but bodies passing over the Falls at the point selected by the present victim

were, as a matter of fact, very seldom seen again.

Sick and stunned, Marco remained in retirement for hours, her imagination swirling in the green caverns of the river with that which had been Cyno; but at last she pulled herself together, bathed her flushed face and heavy eyes, locked away the boy's poor little treasures and went downstairs to resume life once more.

She had never mentioned Cyno to either Rex or Leila, and now she was very glad that she had not done so, and that the little secret was still her own.

It was only that to Marco, a little secret, without shame or bitterness. It was not her fault that it had been the life and death tragedy of another soul.

But she could not help dreaming of the river at night, nor starting sometimes when the telephone rang, lest it should be a long distance call and a man's voice should summon her imperiously to come immediately to identify the body.

Well, if such a message ever came, she would tell Rex everything.

XVI

It was the custom of Rex and Marco to carry to their homes each evening as many of the workpeople as the largest motor would accommodate, and in the early dusk of a day in mid-August they were returning alone from one of these amiable errands, when they were overtaken and passed by what appeared to be a streak of yellow lightning, but was in reality a man in khaki on a motor cycle. Rex only smiled at the indignity thus put upon him.

"Shall I let her out, Marco, and show the fellow what we can do?" he asked.

"No, indeed," she laughed; "we must not risk speeding this summer—not till the park is finished and 'A Cup of Cold Water' published, and—"

"And—and—" said Rex, reveling in her blushes. "Hello! He is coming back!"

It was true; rapidly as the rider had passed, he was returning at an equally terrific pace, on the wrong side of the road; and as he approached the auto he horrified its occupants by crossing just in front of it, missing a collision by a hand's breadth. Rex shouted angrily at him as he shot into the dusk behind them, and they supposed the incident closed.

But in a few minutes he again caught them up, and with a mocking laugh and a wave of the hand as he passed, vanished along the road before them. A mile farther on they came upon him once more. He lay face downward on the grass under his machine, and was groaning hideously. Marco snatched the brandy flask from the car and sprang out, while Rex ran to the man, lifted the bicycle off and turned him on his back.

"Poor fool!" said Marco, her teeth chattering. "Here, Rex, get him to drink this."

"There's something familiar"—began Rex, and stood considering. No blood was visible, nor other sign of injury. "It's not so dangerous, a fall from a cycle," mused Rex. "I don't believe he's much hurt."

"I am—I am!" declared the prostrate one plaintively. "Hand over the whiskey, miss!"

"Shall I, Rex?" asked Marco, puzzled.

Rex broke out laughing. "Yes, give it to him, of course," he said. "We must kill the fatted calf. It's my cousin Kingdon. Here, old fellow, scramble up; you didn't really fall, did you?"

"Me fall off a wheel!" said Kingdon scornfully. "I, who have ridden broncos in vaudeville and a zebra in a circus! This is apricot brandy, isn't it?" he asked, taking a great gulp.

He got to his feet, a fierce enough figure in the coat of dust that turned his hair gray and his face into the tattooed and mottled mask of a clown. Marco was aware of a strong aversion to him.

"Here's your health, Miss—er—Massie!" he said, with another long

pull at the flask. "Heard of you back in the town, you know. My congratulations to you both."

"Thanks, old man," said Rex. "But how you startled us! And how came you lying here, since you didn't fall?"

"Oh, it's all a hoax," explained Kingdon genially. "It's just my way of coming on the stage. I wonder how I'll go off it this time? Rex, I'll run the car home if you like, and you can sit next me, and we'll put the cycle in the tonneau with Miss Massie."

"But I don't happen to like," said Rex tranquilly. "Miss Massie and I will return as we came, and you can use your wheel."

When they were once more flying along through the twilight, Marco said with an actual shudder:

"Your cousin, Rex—oh, I don't like him!"

"That's a bad lookout for poor Don. What have you against him?"

"Well—he is so consciously, intentionally handsome!"

"Could you discern that through goggles and dust? You are handsome yourself; you should have a fellow feeling for that fault."

"He was impudent—patronizing to me."

"Well, you can turn the tables by playing Lady Bountiful to him. Poor boy! He is ill starved, if anyone ever was. Be kind to him, Marco; we'll try to anchor him here now after his six years' aimless cruising."

"I will—I'll truly try to like and help him, Rex," promised Marco. But she declined to be afflicted with another interview that evening, and insisted upon being put down at Green Gem, trusting that night would soften and eradicate the trifling antipathy.

Instead of which, the night brought her a curdling vision, not this time of Niagara and its tossing prey, but of a witch creature with eyes of live coals and hair of serpents, yet withal beautiful and young, who cried in a wild, moaning voice:

"I am Ranee—Ranee—Ranee! You shall not wed my murderer! I will

strangle you, as he did me, until you bite through your black tongue! But you shall not die so soon as I did! Look! Look! Look!"

And Marco looked at the dream-woman's hands, and there was no flesh on them, but they were made of pale blue trembling flames. And she plunged them into a golden bag which hung at her side, and scattered over Marco clouds of light, warm dust.

"I am Ranee!" she wailed on. "And I am sowing upon you the seeds of cancer and leprosy and all foul ills, and you shall die in torture and not wed my murderer!"

And Marco woke in an anguish of fright, and sobbed upon Leila's breast:

"Leila, they cost too much, money and pleasure do. I want to go back and teach school again, and forget all these things."

But in the morning the brilliant sunshine and perfumed breeze winnowed away all somber fancies, and she went, as usual, to the glen. But she was still shaken by the terror she had passed through, and when she reached the little valley she sat down wearily by the edge of the stream, without energy to take up any task at the moment. It was a pretty stream, with deeps of wonderful varying browns and greens and silvery sparkling shallows, and Marco watched idly the little clear waves ever running, running to seek their home in the bosom of the sea.

Suddenly she perceived at the top of the slope, upon the very ledge which had been Ranee's haunt, a man's figure, a tall, stalwart silhouette against the sky and foliage. It was the newly arrived prodigal, and Marco understood at once that he had taken the earliest opportunity to pay the tribute of a visit and perhaps a tear to Ranee's Rock, where his unfortunate sister had breathed her last.

He moved aside to where the bank was no longer perpendicular, but still so nearly so that Marco blanched as she saw him begin its dangerous descent. Nor did he swing himself freely and lightly down from tree to tree, but proceeded with extreme

deliberation, shaking each clump of leaves, uprooting moss, poking in crevices and rolling away small stones. At first quite at a loss to account for these actions, Marco realized finally that she was looking on at a search for some lost article; and it was not until he had quite finished the descent that he abandoned the quest and, with a regretful shake of the head, lifted his eyes from the ground. Then he perceived Marco and scowled.

"Good morning, Mr. Wycherley."

"Oh, it's Miss Kerrigan!"

"My name is Miss Massie. And I said 'Good morning.'"

"I heard what you said the first time. You've been spying on me!"

"Spying!" cried Marco indignantly. "Why, here I sit on my own territory, where you have no right to come at all without a pass signed by myself—you dare to say I am spying!"

Kingdon faced her, one hand on his hip and his head thrown back. He still wore his khaki suit. A wide soft gray hat framed the childlike red and white of his face and the heavy waves of bronze red hair. His frank, undazzled eyes dwelt coldly upon hers.

An indefinable emotion of revulsion set the girl in a panic.

"I can't stay here," she said hastily. "One or the other of us must go. I am in the right, and this is my place; but I will go. You don't mean to be friends?"

"No, I don't," said Kingdon coolly, but as she turned, stung beyond endurance, to walk swiftly away, he strode along beside her.

"It's awful, I know," said Marco, "for you to come back here and find your sister gone."

"It's misery!" said the young man. "And a stranger in her place! You have, or soon will have, everything that was hers."

The bitter hostility of this stunned Marco for an instant. Then she protested:

"But you are unjust. Why do you grudge your cousin a little comfort after all his suffering? Surely you do not believe—"

"That he killed my sister? I certainly do believe it! She comes to me in dreams and bids me avenge her!"

"Oh, for the matter of that," retorted Marco, "she comes to me, too, and forbids me to marry her murderer. But I shall marry Rex, whatever he has done."

"Yes—and if he is ever hung, you can have the gallows gilded and not feel the expense," sneered Kingdon.

"Oh, what loathsome talk! Rex would never allude to such things."

"Rex daren't."

"Don't walk any farther with me," commanded Marco. "I—I can't seem to breathe right where you are. We are enemies."

"Yes, to the knife!" agreed Kingdon. Then musingly he added: "Yes, it's safer."

"Oh, why didn't we begin by talking about the weather?" mourned Marco. "Why did we strike the personal note so soon?"

"And so hard!"

"But don't tell Rex how we hate each other," implored the girl. "He wouldn't give me up whatever you might say."

"I should hope not."

"And perhaps—in time—we may like each other a little better, you know."

And she hurried away, flinging a "Good-bye" over her shoulder.

"Hang her! Idling about when I wanted the place to myself," muttered Kingdon gloomily, and he only waited till she was out of sight to resume his interrupted search.

XVII

"I THOUGHT you'd come here today," said Marco.

"Is that why you came?" asked Kingdon.

"Why do you begin by being so disagreeable?" flashed Marco. "I thought you would wish to seek me out, to apologize for your rudeness of yesterday. But if you are going to add to the score at each meeting—"

"Rude and disagreeable!" repeated Kingdon. "Well, I'm a soldier of fortune, and naturally my behavior savors more of the camp than of the court."

"Why can't you be kind to me, like the others?"

"My conscience prevents."

"Your conscience!" scoffed Marco.

"Yes," said Kingdon. "I find you so lapped in luxury, so petted and pampered, that I feel called on to supply an opposing influence and torment you a little."

"I can't imagine anyone taking such a grudge against a complete stranger as you have against me," complained Marco.

"'Twill do you good. My discipline shall be bitter but wholesome."

"Why should you desire to wreck my happiness?" demanded the girl.

"'Wreck' is too strong a word. I can't do that; I can only shake the edifice a little."

"But why do you?" she persisted.

"Really, I don't know. It's perversity. I've a propensity to tease and to hoax—like the motorcycle joke the other night, you know. By the way, the first thing you ever said about me was, 'Poor fool!' And that's what I am, I suppose."

"Yes," acquiesced Marco courteously.

"No one can wreck your happiness," proceeded Kingdon, "since it is built on love. That is the only stable foundation. If it rested on the shifting sands of money it would be liable to go down at any moment."

Marco shot a startled glance at him.

"But you are not in such sad case," went on Kingdon. "You are engaged to the best fellow on earth, who deserves love as some men deserve loathing."

"I don't know any such men," said Marco.

"Yes, you do know one," said Kingdon darkly. "But to resume. The deepest sources of satisfaction known to humanity are yours, and if money were to be swept away joy would yet remain with you."

"Yes," averred Marco stoutly, "it certainly would."

"Ha, ha!" Kingdon laughed savagely. "You didn't perceive that I spoke sarcastically, did you? You would have accepted Rex just as promptly as you did if he had had horns and hoofs. Love didn't enter into your calculations at all. You don't know what love is. By heaven, I could teach you—" He broke off abruptly, in a pause more audacious than words. Marco laughed demurely.

"Thanks—I've already secured a teacher," she replied. "No doubt you've had lots of practice. Tell me about it."

Kingdon cast a gloomy glance at her. "I can't," he breathed in a deep sigh. "The less said about my record the better."

Marco stared, and then laughed again. "You absurd boy!" she said. "You want me to believe that you have a past reeking with guilt and crime. But you can't impose on me. I think you the most guileless of youths, incapable of wronging a rabbit."

"You think," said Kingdon with another sigh, "that because my brow is white my soul is white, too. I tell you— But no; 'tis not from such as you that I must seek shriving."

"Tell it to Leila, I beg," suggested Marco. "Then I shall get it at second hand in a novel."

"Has she, then, learned belief?"

"Yes; nothing staggers Leila. And doesn't she talk well? Of course, she often lets mere truth slide by the board to give an effective turn to a sentence."

"Feminine love of display," yawned Kingdon.

"Oh, I shouldn't think," said Marco, nettled, "that *you* would dare animadvert on woman's vanity."

"And why not I in especial?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you; I know you only continue to wear those showy western clothes because they are becoming."

"Ah! You think them becoming?"

"I think *you* think so," she said, smiling.

"My dear cousin that is to be, you

haven't hit anywhere near the bull's-eye. I wear these clothes simply because I haven't any others. I even dine in them, though I know it shocks the servants. I am poor; and, unlike yourself, I can't remedy my state by a rich marriage, loveless or otherwise."

"Don't wander from the question," said Marco; "I don't wish to defend my engagement just now. Go on."

"Look here, then." Kingdon rose from the sward where he had been lolling, and turned his pockets inside out; a bag of tobacco, cigarette papers and a knife made up the contents. "There! These objects, my cycle, a gun and the clothes on my back are all my worldly goods."

"But how could you travel across the continent?"

"Why, I bought a ticket for the first hundred miles, and then kept ahead of the game by winning at cards from the passengers," Kingdon explained cheerfully.

"And how are you going to get money now?" demanded Marco.

"Oh, I'll show the local experts how to play bridge."

"But you must have some savings," persisted Marco. "No matter how small a man's salary is, he can always save something out of it."

"Why, you see, I've never had any salary," said Kingdon. "Somehow, I've always had enough money without bothering to work for it."

"Then," said Marco severely, "you must be a mere cumberer of the earth."

"That's so," admitted Kingdon. He flung himself down again and patted the ground affectionately. "Dear, good mother, you don't in the least mind being cumbered, do you? No, I've cared for no foot of land, no bank-book, horse, nor house—only for a sort of 'this night the heath shall be my bed' existence."

"A soldier of fortune," said Marco, recurring to a previous remark. "I always thought that was a rather taking phrase."

"It is," agreed Kingdon promptly. "A soldier of fortune takes advantage, takes possession, liberties, risks—al-

most anything he can lay his hands on."

"Now it no longer sounds well," said the girl soberly. "It is as if one said vagrant—tramp. How terrible that a man like you should be a pensioner on another man!"

"How dare you talk to me in that strain?" demanded the young man angrily, rising as he spoke.

Marco rose also. "Somebody ought to speak to you," she said calmly. Can you seriously propose to be supported without offering some equivalent?"

"The case isn't so dissimilar to your own," sneered Kingdon. "Kerrigan's money buys your clothes, doesn't it? Those that live in glass houses, you know!"

"No, no!" cried Marco indignantly. "I see what you mean—I see the parallel—but there is a great difference between your case and mine."

"Ah—then you do give him an equivalent?" inquired Kingdon.

"Yes!" she exclaimed eagerly. "I had some money to begin with."

"A paltry six hundred dollars."

"Who told you so much about my affairs? Have you listened at doors or opened letters?"

"Neither—I only know what all the town laughs at."

"Oh, can that be true?" cried Marco, distressed. She struggled for calmness and resumed: "It was a little different with me, I think; I had worked long and faithfully, and had in some sort earned a reward."

"Your work!" said Kingdon with a jarring laugh. "Well, it would be a good thing for the kids in the schools if half the teachers got the grand bounce!"

"You've gone far enough!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I know I'm very humble with Rex and the others, and I have been so with you up to now; but you'll find out I have a good deal of spirit, after all, and may perhaps cause you as much pain as you cause me." She paused, charming with her reddened cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"A truce—a truce! Mayn't I escort you up the hill?"

She gave him a haughty glance of rebuff. "Good-bye!" she said sharply.

"Good-bye!" returned Kingdon amiably, waving his arm in the liberal gesture he was fond of.

"As if he were throwing a lasso!" thought Marco with reluctant admiration, as she trudged up the slope alone with the aid of her alpenstock.

"The oftener I can drive her out of here, the better," observed Kingdon to himself. And he resumed his keen but furtive scrutiny of the ground.

XVIII

THE summer rushed along. Morning after morning Marco tripped down the glen, amid the ringing of axes and hammers, to where the stream wound along, brown and cool, in the shadow of Ranees Rock. The fresh, dewy wood flowers nodded a welcome to her always; but not so the uncourteous Kingdon, who would neither lift his hat nor rise from the bench or bank on which he was lolling.

In the evenings he treated her with the extremest deference, as the bride-elect of his powerful cousin, whose favor it would be well most humbly to conciliate; but when they were alone his demeanor toward her was that of an eighteenth century marquis to a peasant.

One morning as she approached he called out, not looking at her nor desisting from his pastime of skipping flat stones down the stream:

"Are you going to Mrs. Rowley's water party?"

"No, I'm not. Have you been sitting here repenting of the sins you hinted at?"

"No; I have been forecasting future ones," said Kingdon coolly. "Why do you think you won't go?"

"I don't think anything about it; I know I shan't," said Marco. "Rex will be out of town with Mr. Kerrigan, for one thing."

"What a virtuous mouse you are, not to play when the cat's away! It will be the liveliest party you ever saw."

"Too lively," said Marco, shaking her head. "My friends wouldn't wish me to join it."

"Oh, your friends!" scoffed Kingdon. "I was thinking of something. You've often told me how sweetly they took you in here, without a word of question."

"So they did."

"Ha, ha! Rex put a private detective on your track and got your whole simple history before he permitted his mother to call on you."

"That's not true."

"Rex wouldn't do anything so mean, I suppose?"

"Not that—but since you say it's true, it can't be."

"Thanks," said Kingdon carelessly. He began whittling a stick, humming a tune under his breath. Marco was dipping her alpenstock into the stream and watching the silver drops drip quickly back, eager to resume their interrupted flow.

"Why do you keep up that humming?" she asked impatiently. "If you could hum like Eddie Leonard, it would be worth while. As it is, it's very irritating."

"That's why," said Kingdon unmoved. "There's to be a dance at Mrs. Rowley's on our return."

"A dance in August!" said Marco with scorn. "You seem to be deep in her counsels."

"Oh, she likes me," admitted Kingdon. "And if a man can't get quail on toast he is glad to put up with corn meal mush."

"I hate her!" declared Marco. "She said to me once, in her supercilious way: 'You should go abroad, Miss Massie; a trip to Europe would improve you immensely.' I looked her over from head to foot, and said: 'It doesn't seem to have had much effect on you, Mrs. Rowley.'"

"Good for you!" laughed Kingdon. "But I suppose you're unable to see," he proceeded, "that there's the makings of a Mrs. Rowley in yourself."

"In me?" cried the girl, amazed.

"Yes; you are what she was at a lower stage of development. You

were not born for respectability. You'll soon weary of this rich, dull, sober life, and you'll want some excitement. You'll flirt and intrigue, just as Mrs. Rowley does. That's the way you'll begin—I won't presume to say how you'll end."

"I thought you would presume to do anything."

"All right, then; I'll go on. You see, coz, you're an adventuress."

"I'm not!" cried Marco hotly.

"I say you are. How did you get into our set? Wasn't it by adventuring? And do you suppose your bold Columbus-like spirit is forever quelled? If you marry Rex, you will make, as you have already done once, a tremendous protest against the dead stupidity of your existence, and you'll run away from him."

Marco stared, half terrified by his airy confidence. "No—I wish to do only noble things," she murmured.

"Too late. The whole bent of your nature is against it."

"You are cruel."

"I am honest. Why do you suppose you like to come down by the stream every day, to fence with me as you do? It's simply your unconscious rebellion against the restraints of your daily life."

She continued to gaze at him, wondering if haply there might be a grain of truth in his words.

"All the chances of fate, thrilling hazards, sickening dangers, the bliss, the triumph of success—that's the kind of thing you'd share in if you married me."

"Am I to regard that as an offer?" asked Marco demurely.

"When I make an offer, coz, the young lady will be in no doubt as to my meaning."

"Distant be the day! The young lady will see plenty of life's storm and stress, and little of its comfort."

"Comfort—I despise it. Leave it to cats and lapdogs. Give me, instead of comfort, a wild gallop over the prairie with the Indians behind me!"

"Yes, a hundred miles behind!" said Marco derisively. "You'll never

get any sensible girl to share your lot by dwelling on its theatrical features. Better speak of a little safe, secluded home."

"Of course; a woman always wants more than a man has got!" growled Kingdon.

"Not more than he can easily get," said Marco firmly. "If you go to work—"

"There are so many things more amusing than work."

"Take up some work, and in a few years you will be in a position to marry the girl of your choice."

"But someone else may have got her first."

"I am sure Mr. Kerrigan would secure you an appointment."

"Get me a job—why don't you speak as you were brought up to do?"

"Won't you think of it?" pleaded Marco. "I want—oh, I do want to help you!"

"Oh!" Kingdon clasped his hands at the back of his head and cavernously yawned. "Oh, Marco, if you only knew how awfully tired you make me! I suppose you've been reading about the gentle influence of women, how much good they can do, and all that. They've never done me any good. And it makes me tired to hear you dispensing advice and offering to get me a place—you, a child of the gutter! A year ago, when you were neglecting the brats in school, I guess you were trembling for your own place!"

"I'm not a child of the gutter!" said Marco, ready to cry. "My parents were poor but respectable—eminently respectable."

"Oh, your parents!" said Kingdon. He began to laugh softly. "At first, do you know, I couldn't account for Kerrigan's interest in you."

"You can't comprehend simple goodness of heart as a motive."

"At first I thought he was trying to cut Rex out."

"Absurd! He is old enough to be my father."

"Precisely, and that just explains it. He *is* your father, beyond a doubt."

For all rejoinder, Marco sprang from the ground, ran across to her insulter and dealt a vicious blow straight at his face with the alpenstock. Kingdon caught at it with lightning quickness, and the blow did not fall. Both young faces were white with rage.

"If I hadn't guarded, you'd have broken my arm, you fury!"

"Coward! Slanderer!" she cried stormily. "If I knew any worse name I would call you it!"

"Sorry your vocabulary's so limited!"

"Oh, stop your silly sneering—stop it, I say! I'll have no more of it! Leave my presence, wretched liar, vile traducer of the dead that you are! Leave the glen this moment, or I will have the men eject you! Go!"

And Kingdon, all his jibes silenced for once, walked away with as much dignity as he could muster, leaving Marco mistress of the field.

She flung herself down by the stream again, and went on beating the water with the stick as she had been doing during the conversation.

"All the spiteful, wicked sprites that infest my heart he calls forth at a glance, as Glendower called spirits from the deep," she thought angrily. "Oh, if he were only as good as he is handsome, how happy he might make some girl!"

And suddenly she was aware of a senseless, sullen dislike of the unknown girl whom there was a future possibility of Kingdon's making happy.

Gradually she became calm, and then she realized that she had been rather recklessly poking and thrusting about in the tiny bay, so that there was a muddled confusion in a yard or so of the usually crystal water. She watched it clear away and settle, but when it had done so the sand and gravel were not of an even gray as usual; there was in the midst of it a small red and pinkish patch that gleamed like metal. She reached down and picked the object out of the water; it was a ring.

A ring! This, then, was what

Kingdon had been searching for that first morning, when he had accused her of spying on him!

But when could he have lost it? Obviously, before he left Wych Elms. Then, it must have lain all these years in the bed of the stream, under some stone which she had just dislodged.

A ring! What had she ever heard about Kingdon and a ring? She knitted her brows in thought.

At last it came back—her first dinner at Wych Elms—carnelian—copper—crowns—the word "*Reviens*"! This ring which she had found was the ring which Rex and Regina had given Kingdon.

But when could he have lost it? It had been a parting gift. "*We gave it to him at the station.*"

Then, Kingdon must have returned to the glen and lost the ring at some point between his public departure and the morning Marco had seen him searching.

But no one at Wych Elms was aware that he had so returned.

Why should he have concealed it? Good heavens! Could it be that he was the murderer of his own sister?

"Oh, Rex, my only love, my husband almost!" Marco whispered. "Can it be that I shall have the happiness of clearing your name—our name—at last?"

And she tied the ring in her handkerchief, went to the garage, took out her runabout and raced into the city, where she laid before Kerrigan the ring and her story.

XIX

DINNER at Wych Elms was just over. Regina and Kerrigan had found, as usual, a "*petit coin*" somewhere, and were not visible. The other four were seated on the terrace in the moonlight, the rich odors from beds of day lilies floating about them.

It was the lull before the storm, for Kerrigan had not yet declared how and when to make public the evidence against Kingdon.

"I know I'm dull tonight," observed Leila. "My head is full of bright

sayings, only I'm saving them for my new story."

"Then you have already some ideas for another book?" asked Rex.

"Oh, one or two."

"Surely that's enough," said Kingdon.

"I don't know. It's to be in the severely simple pastoral style, and it takes a good deal of brains to float that."

"Even 'The Vicar of Wakefield,'" said Marco, "penned by a less masterly hand, would be stupid."

"It is now," pronounced Kingdon.

"You're a Goth," declared Leila. "Still, quiet though my projected novel is, I wouldn't disdain a fresh incident or two, no matter how audacious or startling. Marco tells me that you frequently hint at awesome secrets guarded in your breast. If this was not an idle boast, out with them, and I will work them into the book."

"Yes, Kingdon, tell us a story," begged Rex, and Marco chimed in frigidly.

In vain Kingdon declared that he had no story to tell.

"What, quite chopfallen? Not a word to throw at a dog?" mocked Marco. "Where be now all the adventures, surpassing those of Othello, with which you professed yourself able to regale the world?"

"Really, there's only one little story comes into my mind at this moment, and it's one I'd rather not tell."

"As if your inclinations mattered in the least! Go on."

"Well," began Kingdon slowly, "it happened out West."

"The land of stormy passions, reckless revenge and short shrift."

"I was one of twelve men in a lonely spot in Arizona, partly camping, partly boarding with a man named Cheseldine. Various purposes had drawn us there, health, hunting, fishing and prospecting, and we had a painter and a writer in camp. There was only one out-and-out idler beside myself, staying where he had drifted because he was too lazy to move away. His name was Luke Robinson."

Leila suddenly bent forward and listened tensely. "What was Luke Robinson like?" she asked.

"A very handsome man, dark face, clean shaven, big jet black eyes."

"Ah! Well, go on."

"This Cheseldine was not by any means a poor man; he had plenty of money, kept several servants and opened his house to strangers chiefly for the sake of company. He was English and of high social position. He had left home on his daughter's account."

"A daughter," said Leila. "Enter the feminine element."

"She was the most beautiful creature I ever saw, though she was only sixteen years old. Poor, lovely little Nina!"

"What was wrong with her?" asked Leila gently.

"Why, you see, her mind was not sound; its development seemed to have been arrested. She couldn't read or write; she would talk rationally for a while, but presently a vacancy would creep into her expression, and she would lose the thread and begin babbling about something else. Cheseldine idolized her, and he was always hoping that the simple life and the wonderful climate would cure her."

"There really did seem to be some foundation for these hopes. We could see a gradual change in her; she became more silent, and deep thoughts seemed to be struggling for expression. The fellows all behaved like brothers to her—but at last"—and Kingdon had the grace to falter a little—"it became evident that someone had not—had not regarded her quite as a sister."

"Of course her father was the last man in camp to find out. But one night one of the women told him. I hope I may never hear again such a burst of fury. Nina had never seen her father so angry before, but her calm replies showed her to be only bewildered, not alarmed."

"'You know, we are married, papa,' she pleaded. 'He said so.'"

"'Who said so?' stormed Cheseldine."

Of course he knew it was a lie, for there was neither parson nor justice within fifty miles. 'Who said you were married, Nina? Tell me his name.'

"'I forget,' she murmured."

"'Give me that hound's name, that I may tear the black heart out of his body!' shrieked Cheseldine."

"'It's gone—it's gone!' moaned the terrified girl."

"'Then I'll kill you!' cried her father, and he actually lifted his arm to strike her."

"Poor Nina dropped cowering at his feet. The women soothed her, and some of the men persuaded Cheseldine to control himself. But when Nina rose from her knees even the little spark of reason that had glowed in her face for the past few weeks had been forever extinguished by the fright and excitement."

"'If the wretch that's among you thinks to go free, he is mistaken!' said Cheseldine with forced calm. 'He is one of you twelve! All I have to do is to single him out—and by God, I'll do it!'"

"And he raised his right hand and swore a solemn oath to avenge his wrongs. 'Boys, help me to find the man out!' he said. 'Eleven of you are honest men; will you help me?'"

"And what could the twelve do but respond? Before another minute we stood pledged not to break camp until the mystery was solved and the villain hung on the nearest tree."

"Though we had entered on the agreement hastily, yet we had to stand to it. No man ventured to leave; flight meant pursuit and death."

"At last Nina fell ill, and in a few hours it was said that she was dying, and that her mind had suddenly become clearer than it ever was before. The women told her that she must bid all the boys good-bye."

"They were hanging about the house—all except one called Valentine. This Valentine had gone out for a ride. One by one she clasped the big, strong hands, trying to smile as she whispered 'Good-bye!'"

"Suddenly her eyes dilated and she said distinctly: 'Why, where's Valentine? He ought to be here—we're married, you know—he said so!'"

"As she ceased speaking a shiver ran over her, and almost before the men gathered the sense of her words the breath left her body."

"Ah! And did you catch Valentine?" asked Leila.

"No, we didn't," said Kingdon. "Do you know what I believe?" he asked soberly. "I believe that Nina's spirit, swifter than her avengers' horses, crossed the hills to the man whose love had given her the only gleam of conscious happiness she had ever known, and warned him to go—whispered: 'Ride, ride for your life!'"

"I'm sorry he got off," said Leila vindictively.

"Oh, he's not out of the woods yet," said Kingdon. "Every man in the party bound himself by an oath either to kill him on sight or to put Cheseldine on his track. The world isn't so very wide in a case of this kind, so the sword of Damocles is always hanging over his head. Well, how do you like my story?"

"To be plain with you, not at all," said Leila. "It is too violent and unrelieved altogether."

"It lacks the two great 'H's'—Hero and Humor," said Rex.

"And you?"

"Oh, I thought it utterly revolting!" said Marco coldly.

"Well, I must say you're an ungrateful lot," said the narrator, lighting a fresh cigar.

When the four rose to reënter the house, Marco and Kingdon found themselves in a momentary detachment from the others, in the shadow of a great laburnum. Their eyes met in the gloom.

"I suppose, coz," said Kingdon airily, "that you still fancy you hate me?"

"You have hardly glanced at me this evening," pouted the girl.

"You have such an infernal silly trick of blushing when I do!" explained Kingdon.

XX

"Ah, my fair cousin, I see you have been weeping!"

"Yes, Kingdon, I have—but only tears of happiness!"

And Marco pressed a handkerchief to her cheeks and eyes, and smiled at Kingdon as he came down the bank in his usual gingerly way, his eyes ever probing into moss and earth—for the copper ring, reflected Marco.

"And what special delight can you have received so early in the morning?" inquired the young man, seating himself beside Marco on a pile of lumber.

"It's Rex," she explained. "He is so good."

"Too good to be true," said Kingdon languidly. "What's the paragon been doing now?"

"Well, you know it was part of our arrangement that I should have the privilege of naming this park. I've tried and tried all summer to find a name that would be fitting and worthy and acceptable. I thought of Kerrigan Park, Coldwater Park, Bowlder, Brook, Fern, Forest Park, of English, Irish, Scotch, Egyptian, East Indian, American Indian names, but nothing seemed right at all. And this morning, when I came out of the house, there stood Rex by the fountain with his pad and pencil, jotting away—you know he is just finishing his book—and he said: 'Don't trouble any more about the name for our park. I have chosen it myself, after all. It shall be Massie Park.' Oh, Kingdon, isn't that beautiful? Such a monument to my dear, good, unappreciated people!"

"Humph! A gallery play!"

"I suppose if you said one word of praise or gratitude about your cousin it would choke you to death!"

"You forget my cause for hatred—he killed my sister. But you don't stick at a little thing like that in a rich suitor."

"You always speak as if money were Rex's only recommendation. He is young, handsomer than you—"

"Rats! He's a phenix, rising suddenly from the ashes of a murder

charge into authorship, public honors and marriage. Let's hope no new evidence against him will come to light and interrupt the latter ceremony."

Marco narrowed her eyes at him. "Are you sure he killed your sister?" she asked quietly. "Don't you remember in 'Weir of Hermiston,' where Weir is running down Archie, and Kirsty says 'God! Ye'd better get the taste o' Archie's cakes out o' your mouth first!' Did you have cakes for breakfast, Kingdon?"

He looked dangerous. "If it weren't for all these people about, I believe I'd throttle you!" he said.

"Quite in your line," she drawled. "But as you were suggesting, some new evidence—" She broke off, frightened at herself, and after a moment went on in an ordinary tone, "Do you know, cousin Kingdon, you are not the only young man who has borne me company during my mornings here in the glen? There was one before you came, the nicest young fellow, gentle as a girl. He used to help me in the early stages of the work; and he finally saved my life."

"Did he make love to you?"

"Well, yes, he did, a little. But he was so timid and reverential, there was no offense in it. He just couldn't help himself, that was all."

"What became of him?"

"Oh, Kingdon, he died! He died for my sake; he drowned himself. Oh, oh, when I think of him the tears always come—poor boy, poor child! For he seemed scarcely more than a child, Kingdon, so guileless, knowing nothing of life and its evils."

"And did he say," sneered Kingdon: "'Lady, my name is Cyno; lady, I am Greek?'" He pulled a little red cap from his pocket, clapped it on his head and grinned at her.

She only stared, breathless. What—the love, the sorrow, the death of Cyno—were they all only a sham? Had there never been any Cyno at all?

"Ha, ha! I nearly died laughing when I saw how that story of silent

worship caught you!" said Kingdon merrily. "How it tickled your vanity! Why, I had never even heard of you, but disguised myself and applied for work here because I wanted a chance to look—never mind what for."

"But Cyno's skin was olive."

"Brunette powder."

"And his hair was black—"

"Walnut stain."

"And curly."

"Well, I could have my hair curled, couldn't I? And days when it had just been done, I'd go bareheaded before you, so respectful, but other days I kept my cap on. But it got to be too much work, and I saw I could just as well be here in my own person, so I left."

"But the official letter—the printed heading?"

"Everything faked," said Kingdon amiably. "Of course, I took care to avoid meeting my cousins, and even kept out of the old servants' way. I was pretty proud of my acting."

Marco gave a long, weary sigh. There was a strange confusion in her mind. This man now sitting beside her, her bitter enemy, had once loved her, at least, had said that he loved her, and had made her believe it; he had even kissed her. Ah, what a vile trickster! Well, revenge was ready to her hand.

"You haven't found the article which you have so diligently searched for," she remarked tranquilly.

"Haven't I?"

"No—for I have found it, instead—the ring that slipped from your finger into the stream when you washed your sister's blood off your hands!"

"Was it there? Give it to me—give it to me!"

"I can't give it to you," pursued Marco steadily, "because it is no longer in my possession. Mr. Kerrigan is taking charge of it. After election a statement will be issued to the press, explaining how and where the ring was found, and clearing Rex from all suspicion. And if there's anything you can do to clear yourself as well, I

advise you to go to the proper authorities and do it."

It was Kingdon's turn to sigh, but it was a sigh of relief, and he seemed to fling off a weight.

"I'm glad, after all, that the truth is coming out at last," he said. "And Marco, see here—you don't think the worst of me, do you? I wouldn't have hurt my poor little sister for all the world."

"No, I don't believe that you actually killed her," said Marco. "It must have been an accident, of course; but you were present, and you should have come forward and exonerated Rex."

"I know it; I am ashamed, horribly ashamed," said Kingdon. "I didn't even hold my tongue; I've kept on hinting that he did it, till I'm tired of the lie. It's the only lie I ever got tired of," he added naively. "And oh, Marco, what a comfort it is to be able to talk of it truthfully at last!"

This was a new Kingdon—a Kingdon confessing himself weak and wrong and in need of human sympathy.

"Poor Raneel!" he went on gravely. "I loved her before I could walk, I think, and the more peevish and fretful she grew the more I loved her. You can't imagine, Marco, how I suffered when she gave back all my tenderness in hatred and issued a decree of banishment against me. It was the dawning of misrule in her brain, and I understood and pardoned it; but it was a stab from the hand that I loved best on earth.

"Well, I had to go; but after a while a longing came over me to get back and see them all again. I knew of Raneel's marriage, and thought that at last she might be happy. Well, I returned, quietly and unexpectedly, saw the new house and wandered about the grounds till I came upon Raneel seated on the cliff. The instant she saw me she sprang up and rushed at me like a fiend, her old antipathy ten times reinforced, calling upon God to strike me dead. You see, my sudden reappearance was all that was needed to raze the tottering wall

between reason and madness. I had to grip her arm so hard to prevent her doing herself or me an injury that the marks of my fingers were visible later; otherwise, the death would have obviously been suicide.

"At last she grew calmer, said she was ashamed of herself and begged me to release her. Completely duped, I loosed my hold, when with one swift whirl she flung herself over the cliff!

"Her body crashed through shrubs and rolled over stones. I dashed down the bank, ran and fetched water in my hat from the stream and knelt down beside her; but she was already dead. Mechanically I straightened the poor little frame as it lay upon the turf and arranged the disordered dress.

"Then came the impulse to fly, to escape from the horrible place. People might say I had borne a grudge against her; and at best I should be blamed for dropping out of the skies upon her, thus dissipating her last shred of reason. She was dead; it could not help her if the whole city came to her side; they would be sure to find her in an hour or so. So I kissed her and came away.

"I waited in Levine's a few days. When I read that Rex was accused of murder I was very near coming back and making a clean breast of it, only that Kerrigan got him off so quickly.

"I didn't miss the ring for days, and was never certain that I had lost it here.

"Poor Raneel! Do you know, Marco, when we were five years old a gipsy read our hands and prophesied that we should both die violent deaths! Half the saying is proved true. But see how strangely things come about. If I hadn't allowed Rex to get into such a box, Kerrigan couldn't have got him out of it; if Kerrigan hadn't laid Cousin Regina under a deep debt of gratitude, she wouldn't have gratified him by taking you up. You see that I am indirectly the cause of all your good fortune."

"It's the law of compensation," said Marco softly. She was touched by Kingdon's new humility, by his

striving to win some credit for himself from her. "I'm sorry, oh, so sorry, Kingdon, for all you have had to go through; but I am sure it will be easier for you henceforth. We understand each other better, at all events, do we not?"

"We surely do," said Kingdon, and they shook hands in a pact of friendship.

"Do you think they'll give me my ring back, Marco? I loved that ring."

"Of course they will, and everything will be made right."

"And will you go with me to Mrs. Rowley's party?"

"Oh, that? But I refused you that, over and over."

"But you can't refuse me anything today, can you, Cousin Marco?"

She looked at him, and to her surprise saw tears in his eyes. "No, Don, I can't," she said gently. "Certainly I'll go with you."

XXI

As the animals entered the ark, so did the young people leave Mrs. Rowley's motor yacht in pairs when the last landing was made, just in the edge of evening, at a lonely spot called Olive Island.

Marco and Kingdon were the first to go ashore, and they wandered farthest along the beach, strolling past little coves and headlands that soon hid the dock from sight.

"Can we hear them if they whistle?" asked Marco.

"Certainly we can."

"I think we should be going back now," she said. "It is getting dusk."

Kingdon looked at his watch. "We have been away only twenty minutes," he said. "But we will go back now."

"Yes, let us hurry," begged Marco, and they raced back, running and stumbling.

But when they came in sight of the dock the *Flamingo* was gone. She was out of hearing utterly, and nearly out of sight, her lights twinkling away up the river. Mrs. Rowley had by no

means abandoned the barbarous project of a dance in August, and she had not been minded to spend much time on Olive Island while musicians and caterer waited in her house.

To Marco it seemed that night fell in one instant. The pink and pearl had faded out of the west, and river, sky and shore had suddenly become of a uniform grayness. Little waves lapped the sand at their feet, and the breeze stirred the trees to light murmurs. A terror seized the girl, terror of the solitude, the coming darkness. She turned dismayed to her companion.

"Now cry!" was all he said.

"I will not! I never felt less like crying in my life. But, Kingdon, you know you said we could hear if they whistled."

"Yes—if," admitted Kingdon calmly. "They didn't whistle at all. Perhaps the engineer was drunk and forgot."

"But what is to be done?"

"They may miss us and come back for us."

"No; they're all absorbed in each other. Will no boats be passing?"

"There may be a moonlight excursion by and by; but it would not reach the city till two or three o'clock in the morning."

"Is there no house on the island?"

"Not even a fisherman's shanty or a saloon."

"Oh, Kingdon, you have proved a false friend! If I was imprudent, you should have saved me from my folly!"

"A man is only flesh and blood."

"A man, even the meanest, must have some principles of honor which cannot be appealed to in vain. You got me into this scrape, and now you must get me out of it. You can, I know you can, for you are cool and ready and brave. Oh, Kingdon! I have it! You can swim over to the mainland and fetch a boat for me."

"Not any in mine, thanks. What—tire myself out, catch cold, run the risk of losing my life, all to oblige you?"

"What is your life worth, anyhow?" demanded Marco unkindly.

"It's worth a good deal to me!"

"Leander used to take *much* worse risks."

"Yes, for a woman who loved him. So might I; but I won't do it for a vixen."

"But you see, Kingdon," argued Marco, "if you were drowned and I stayed here alone, people would say very different things—much kinder things."

"No doubt—only I should be past enjoying their kindness."

"The devil takes care of his own—I know you won't drown—you can't."

"I know I won't, too," said Kingdon coolly, "for I shan't make the attempt."

"I detest you!" said Marco fiercely, stamping her foot. "Kingdon! I think you planned this—I think you bribed the man not to whistle! It's contemptible—it's dastardly—I can't believe it even of you—and yet—I do believe it."

"And if I did," said Kingdon ruefully, "I haven't gained much. The investment is a dead loss."

"What could you have gained by it?" the girl went on mournfully.

"Haven't I lavished more, far more, of my time upon you than I ought? Was it worth while to scheme and plot and tarnish my name for the sake of one hour more of my company?" And she began to cry softly.

"Ah, Marco," pleaded Kingdon, "have I done so very wrong—to seek one sweet hour in a summer night alone under the stars? Next summer you will be Rex's wife, you know, and I shall be—not here. But for this one evening, Marco, my darling—darling—I meant you to be mine!"

"How dare you?" cried Marco, and broke into stormy sobbing. She heard him give a heavy sigh and walk quietly away.

After a moment she turned and watched him through the deepening gloom. He flung off hat, coat and vest with impatient motions, unlaced his shoes, ripped off his hose, tossed

everything into a heap and stepped to the water's edge. The girl looked over the river, no longer gray, but black, and a tremor ran through her.

"You can have my watch, Marco, and my matchsafe, in case you don't see me again," he called cheerfully.

The next instant she was standing in front of him, clutching one of his shirt sleeves in each hand, and lifting her tear-stained face in an agony of appeal.

"Oh, Kingdon, dear, dear Kingdon, don't go, I beg of you!" she implored. "I didn't mean a single word I said—I take it all back!"

"And how about the tarnishing of your name?" asked Kingdon, regarding her with eyes half tender, half scornful.

"Oh, it's nothing, less than nothing, if only you will not be drowned!" she cried piteously. "I'm sorry I was so cross with you, dear, but at my worst I never wanted you to die!"

"No, no, darling—of course not," said Kingdon soothingly. He lifted her hands to clasp them around his neck, and his arms slipped down about her waist and drew her closer. Their lips met, and her head drooped, faint with a wild, new rapture, against his breast.

"Then you do love me, Marco?" he asked after a moment.

"Oh, I suppose so!" she answered in a hushed, happy voice. She began to laugh a little. "Do you know, I've wanted so often to pinch your arms and find out if they were really as tense and hard as they seemed," she said. "And now I can; and they are!"

"Yes," assented Kingdon. "I can swim over easily enough; and I think I ought to."

"No, no!" she cried, terrified anew. "Do you suppose we shall ever quarrel again?"

"Never!"

"I don't know—I shouldn't like to think it was over forever. It was very piquant."

"It's past," said Kingdon decidedly. "I can never say another word to pain you." He kissed her again, and a tide

of joy, resistless as a lava flood, swept over her soul, whelming all other passions, fears, fancies in one exquisite consciousness.

"Cyno, Cyno!" she whispered. "Do you remember that other time you kissed me, Cyno? There's nothing left in the world except my love for you!"

"My pearl!"

"I wish I could die now, Cyno!" murmured the girl in her low, sweet, joyous voice. "Whatever the years hold in store for me, they will never bring such another perfect hour as this!"

"Rose of the world, they will bring thousands! Ah, how precious life is!" And he kissed her brow, cheek, chin, her lips; her eyes closed in a blissful trance.

"Kingdon," she whispered at last, "I hear a noise—what is it?"

"Curse it! So soon!" muttered Kingdon. "Yes, I hear it, too; it is a motor boat's exhaust. There she comes. Shall I hail her?"

"Why, Kingdon, of course," she said, surprised. "Oh, I wish, I wish—you needn't!" she cried, nestling nearer to him. "But you must—oh, quickly, quickly, dear! Don't let them go without us!"

He shouted, and the boat slowed down and the lights shifted.

"She's coming," said Kingdon, straining Marco to him. Neither could endure to let the other go; close and closer they were folded in each other's arms; over and over again their lips met and clung together; but at last the embrace dissolved, to be renewed in its divine freshness—never.

The arrival was a speed boat, and the two men running her offered the hospitality of the craft to the marooned pair. Kingdon hastily donned his apparel; they embarked, and the boat shot up the river, dashing along between two great white fins of spray. She passed the *Flamingo* a mile from the dock, so that Marco and Kingdon had plenty of time to find a secluded nook from which they issued unobserved to mingle with the *Flamingo's* passengers when they landed.

"Why, where have you been?" asked Mrs. Rowley when she saw them. "Most of us have had such a jolly time on deck, and I quite missed you."

"We preferred the bow," said Kingdon coolly.

She was to sleep at Mrs. Rowley's after the dance, and when Kingdon had said good night and departed she lay for a long time awake amid the cool linens of her bed, living over again that hour of unspeakable strangeness and ecstasy, her eyes shining and her lips smiling in the dark.

At last a sudden thought brought a hot, humiliated flush to her cheeks, and she sat up straight in bed, as if she sought to pierce the blackness and read an explanation there.

"Can it be possible?" she whispered. "Why, he never said a word about breaking my engagement! He never asked me to marry him!"

XXII

SINGULAR as was the omission, the fact that Kingdon permitted day after day to pass without attempting to repair it was to Marco yet more astonishing. It seemed to her that the relinquishment of her troth to Rex was imperatively necessary; but, to her amazement, Kingdon was able to conduct himself just as if the interview on Olive Island had never taken place.

The interviews in the glen were terminated abruptly, as if Kingdon's sole object in going there had been the recovery of his ring. Besides, the place was full of workers, and, Rex's book being finished, he was at liberty to assist Marco in the final arrangements for the opening of Massie Park.

Marco felt bitterly humiliated as the days slipped by and Kingdon made no effort to come to a more complete understanding with her. She perceived finally that matters were to be allowed to drift along without any attempt on Kingdon's part to change their course, and that she would become the wife of one man after she had confessed her

love for another; and a deep resentment against the man whose selfishness had forced her into this intolerable situation smoldered in her breast.

"And does he think he can remain here always?" she asked herself, scarlet with shame and anger. "No, a thousand times no! My husband shall send him away!"

"Marco," said Leila one night, "what is it that is troubling you lately? What makes you unhappy?"

"Well, Leila," said the girl, faltering a little, "I've been granted the wish I made last winter—I'm in the Maelstrom!"

"Yes, certainly, you're in the Maelstrom, and you're spinning gaily and giddily around; but you're not going to let Kingdon Wycherley drag you down and drown you and end your rotation in disgrace, are you? Perhaps you are not aware of it, but Mrs. Rowley considers herself engaged to him."

"Oh, Leila!"

"Yes," said Leila unflinchingly, "and I am engaged to him, too! He wants me to get a divorce from Louis and marry him. I laughed at him, but he swears he is in earnest. Ah, girlie, don't waste a word on him! He's a mere will-o'-the-wisp of a man, who can only lead women into black quagmires."

Preparations for the turning over of Massie Park to the city went steadily on. The opening was to be on the fifteenth of September, the wedding of Marco and Rex occurring two weeks later, while that of Mrs. Wycherley and Mr.—or Governor-elect—Kerrigan was set for the third day after election.

"I really couldn't have allowed this park project to go through this summer, Regina," declared Kerrigan, "if we were married. It would have been called an advertising dodge, a vote getting scheme."

"It couldn't have hurt you; nothing can hurt you—you are the greatest man in this country; and you will be Governor, then Senator some day."

Refreshments on the opening day

were to be dispensed free, while Rex and Marco were to receive all comers as their guests and personal friends. Marco was to be dressed entirely in white like a bride. "For they can't all be at my wedding, poor dear things," she said, "and I want to look as nearly as possible as I shall then."

At last came the great day, a clear blue and golden day, the leaves just beginning to turn yellow, the air warm and like wine, full of rich autumnal odors, and with great dignity of procedure the tract of land was transferred from Rex and Regina Wycherley to the Corporation of Wycherley.

Then the band struck up; dancing began, and the public was made free of the delights of Massie Park. Never was a woman more praised and flattered than was Marco. High and low, gentle and simple, joined in giving her full credit for the project and its carrying out; and the whole affair became an ovation to the beautiful bridelike young woman.

Late in the afternoon Leila received a message from the house, to the effect that a gentleman wished to speak to her, and was waiting at Green Gem.

"It must be some business about my book," she told herself, hastening to obey the summons. "It can't, oh, it can't be Louis himself!"

In the tiny vestibule Verna was waiting, all in a quiver of gleeful excitement.

"Wouldn't he give you his card?" whispered Leila.

"He says you don't know his name," returned Verna.

"Oh!" gasped Leila, heartstruck with disappointment. She entered the little Dresden parlor and the portières of delicate brocade closed her in.

A man stood gazing at her thirstily, his black eyes drinking in the first sweet sight of her charming figure and the face that went from white to red and back again.

"Madame, my wife! Behold the soap you requested me to bring home!" he began, trying to laugh; but the

dainty box fell from his hand to the floor and Leila was in his arms.

"No, no! You shan't kiss me—you shall never kiss me," she cried, "until you swear on a thousand Bibles never to run away again!"

"I swear it, *ma'mie!* Oh, how perfect you are—this red-gold hair, this robe of silky violet, the laces of cream! Why did I ever leave you? I have been an imbecile—yes, a doddering idiot!"

"But why did you stay so long? Where have you been?"

"At first, many places—this last year with my poor uncle in the south of France. He suffered, and had need of me; but at last he was released, God rest his soul! Then I raced, I flew to you, *mon ange!*"

"But how could you joke even at the last minute, and tell the maid I did not know your name?"

"But you do not, *ma chérie!* You think my name is Louis Robideaux, do you not? Ah, no! I am the Comte de Chaseau! I lay at your feet a title and an estate, *ma petite amie*. I could wish truly that there were a little more money to support the chateau in grandeur, but—"

But Leila had slipped from his embrace, had rushed into the hall and taken down the receiver.

"Mr. Vedder's office—Mr. Vedder? . . . This is the author of 'The Topaz and the Traitor' speaking. . . . No, not Mrs. Robideaux— Well, yes, I suppose so. What I wish to inquire is, can I change the title page? . . . Certainly—not too late? That's good! Well, then, make it read, 'The Topaz and the Traitor, by Leila Robideaux, Comtesse de Chaseau!' . . . Yes—yes, indeed! The Comte has just arrived from France. The change of name ought to triple the sale, don't you think? . . . Yes, thank you—and I congratulate you, too! Good-bye!"

She returned to the parlor and nestled again in his arms.

"Oh, Louis, how wonderful your eyes are! Nothing has changed them, heaven be praised!"

"I've been making a new home for

you today, *ma mignonne*," said Louis tenderly. "It is only a suite at the hotel, but I ordered flowers and bought some perfumes and the soap you like. You'll come, won't you? A carriage is waiting."

"Verna must pack a few things for me, and meanwhile I'll present you to Marco and the others," said Leila.

They went out to the park, and so many persons clustered around the wanderer that a second reception was held on the spot. The reporters found the Comte a very expansive and obliging subject, and he artlessly informed them that he had almost daily written the Comtesse an entreaty to join him at "Les Tourelles," his ancestral home.

When the Comte and Comtesse had extricated themselves from the respectful throng of humble admirers and were passing to their carriage along an alley of box, they came face to face with Kingdon Wycherley.

"Robinson!" he cried, starting back.

"Valentine!" cried the other, equally moved.

"How dramatic!" said Leila, laughing nervously. "What is all this, gentlemen?"

"I don't know what it is!" said Kingdon, grinding his teeth. "It is for you to say, sir! What is it to be—peace or war?"

The Comte de Chaseau paused an instant. "For today—a truce," he said, bowing courteously.

"Thanks," said Kingdon stiffly; he also bowed and passed on.

But for him the charm had departed out of the light and music and fragrance; and though he and Mrs. Rowley made merry over their dinner, the taste of it was as the apples of Sodom in his mouth.

"Well, Comte?" said Leila. "I suppose I may call you Comte, mayn't I?"

"Certainly not!" said Robideaux, really shocked. "Call me Louis, of course. Well—yes, I've met that man before; but it's a long, disagreeable story, and you would find no pleasure in hearing it."

"Fortunately, Kingdon had no such scruples," said Leila drily, "since he told me the whole story of Cheseldine and his daughter Nina."

"Callous scoundrell! But I cannot enter into that unhappy father's vengeance," said Louis gloomily.

"Why, you promised," said Leila firmly. "And you must do something to make good; you can at least threaten Kingdon and drive him away."

"What harm has the poor boy done you? His sin is sinned and over with."

"That particular one is, but he has a large and varied assortment. I tell you, Louis, I never was so glad of anything—except, of course, your return—as I am of this chance of banishing Don Wycherley at just this juncture."

"But surely not before his cousin's wedding? Why such haste?" asked Louis, inclined to temper justice with mercy.

"Louis," said Leila impressively, "I doubt very much if there will be any wedding if we don't get him away at once. He has bewitched poor Marco like a wizard with a love philter. But he will flee from retribution upon receipt of your letter."

"My letter? Am I going to write a letter?" queried Louis.

"You are, this moment," said Leila, and she stopped the carriage at the great portal of Wych Elms and led the way into the library.

"There, that's done!" she said, when the note had been written, closed, addressed and left on the hall table. "And now I can forget other people and think only of you, Comte!"

When the festivities were over and Kingdon came in, he found his letter and read it:

The Comte de Chaseau begs to remind Mr. Wycherley that he will be under the regrettable necessity of communicating Mr. Wycherley's address to Mr. Cheseldine, should he continue cognizant of the same.

"Game's up," muttered Kingdon, betaking himself to the calm sleep of the unjust.

XXIII

NEXT morning, Kingdon pondered upon his situation as he strolled back and forth before the mansion.

"It's not that I mind meeting Cheseldine or anyone else in a fair fight," said Kingdon, flexing and extending his right arm after his favorite fashion. "But Cheseldine mightn't think it necessary," he mused, "to accord me so much grace, and I shouldn't like to be shot in the back." He shuddered with uncontrollable aversion.

"And then Cousin Regina—and Rex! They've never done me any harm. It's not their fault, exactly, that they're rich and I'm poor. No, I won't have a row here and bring any more scandal and disgrace upon the house. All things considered, I guess I'd better light out."

He continued walking and reflecting. Yes, it would be pleasant, as well as expedient, to escape from the dull, weary routine at Wych Elms. Such a life could never be permanently attractive to him, though some people, Marco, for instance, made far greater effort to attain it than they did to secure the entrée into Heaven itself.

Marco. Yes, there was a question to be faced. Should he go—could he go—without her? If he forsook her, would he not too cruelly wound the one heart that beat for him? But if he took her, would not his every step be clogged, his freedom forfeited, his dangers and difficulties multiplied? He made no question of Marco's readiness to go; that was a thing to be taken for granted.

But Rex! He had already told himself that he bore no ill will to his cousin—then why should he not hold his hand from stealing Rex's one ewe lamb? Certainly Rex was a wealthy and personable young man, but he was not facile in his loves, while Kingdon was aware that his own field of choice was circumscribed by no narrowing constancy, and that eyes as black as Marco Massie's sparkled for him throughout the length and breadth

of the land. He finally concluded, with his usual indolence, to postpone his decision for the present. The matter would settle itself somehow; perhaps he would be able to get away without encountering Marco at all.

"Well, dearest," said Rex that evening, "you and I can say with Robert Louis: 'I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work.' The park is finished and the book is finished, and now for a holiday!"

"Yes," murmured Marco, "perhaps we have earned a reward. You deserve it, at least—for you are very, very good, Rex."

"Good night, darling. Do not dream of ships and Rome and Paris; dream only of me."

"Good night, Rex," said Marco, and, standing in the tiny porch, she watched him tenderly, sadly, until he was out of sight among the trees.

A moment later a hand beckoned to her from a nearby thicket. It was Kingdon. She obeyed the gesture, and they flew into each other's arms as inevitably as two drops of quicksilver coalesce. A horse and trap stood near; a coat and a suitcase were in the vehicle.

"Oh! You are going away?" gasped Marco.

"At this hour tomorrow night, Marco," said Kingdon quietly, "I shall be a thousand miles away from here. Must I go alone?"

It had come at last, then, the summons to choose finally and forever between all earth's glories on the one hand and simple love on the other. There was no conflict in Marco's mind; pillowing her head on Kingdon's shoulder, she looked up with eyes of glad consent. Yet she felt the awfulness of it, too, the plunging into the dark; and though she smiled she trembled.

"Myself against the world!" exulted Kingdon. "You'll go with me, Marco?"

"It couldn't be any other way, could it?" said Marco softly.

"No, it couldn't. And I did think, Marco—of leaving you without so much as a good-bye. I thought," he

went on, his voice sinking a little, "I thought it would be the brave and honest thing to do."

"But you couldn't be brave and honest at such cost, could you, Cyno?" she asked with a little gleeful laugh. "And I'm glad—glad! Oh, how wicked I am! It doesn't matter to us about other people, does it?"

"Nothing matters except our love," answered Kingdon. He swore in his heart that he would be true to this girl. "My angel! If it is wrong for us to love—"

"It cannot be wrong; it is so sweet!"

"Surely God will forgive us! I will be a better man, so help me, God! Having your love, I can rise to heights I could not have scaled without it."

"There will be no wedding here," said Marco.

"No, love, but there will be one somewhere in the town, with no guests or gaiety, only such a happy, happy bride and groom. You won't be sorry, Marco?"

"Never—never!"

"Your conscience doesn't smite you—not the very least?"

His blue eyes, dark yet brilliant, looked deep into the black ones, so full of fire and resolution.

"I have killed my conscience," she said steadily, "as I could kill anything, I think, that came between my love and me!"

"O starry eyes, you will light me on an upward way!" he whispered passionately. "Ah, sweet lips and fragrant hair and roseleaf cheeks—all mine, all mine!"

They stood locked in a wild, sweet embrace, rocking to and fro, swayed as by a wind by the violence of their emotion. Then they fell apart and turned to consider the practical needs of the moment.

"What may I bring?" asked Marco.

"Nothing except a handbag."

"But my trousseau? It is mine—bought with my own money."

"Leave every rag of it, I tell you. We can't fuss with trunks now. They will send all our things on after us. I'll buy what you need."

"Very well. Then you have money?"

"Oh, we are not so likely to lack money as some other things," said Kingdon with a cutting laugh. "Now go in and put on your things and don't be over ten minutes."

She obeyed, went upstairs and put on a large, drooping black hat, swathed about with yards and yards of white veiling, by means of which she could withdraw at will into a Turkish woman's retirement. She put some handkerchiefs, money and jewels into the bag Kerrigan had given her, donned a heavy, shapeless auto coat and caught up her gloves and purse.

When she was ready she went to Verna's bedroom door and listened to the soft, regular breathing of youthful sleep. She extinguished all the lights, went downstairs, opened the hall door, heard the spring lock snap behind her and found herself supported by Kingdon's grasp, her satchel in his hand, his voice whispering praise and encouragement in her ear.

Cautiously they threaded their way among the trees to the waiting vehicle. Kingdon untied the horse and they got in. Still cautiously he drove to the carriageway and then along it to the highroad. Once in the thoroughfare they breathed more easily.

How bright the stars were! And how they twinkled against the deep, rich blue-black of the sky! The moon shone forth in unclouded splendor, turning the meanest objects into carven silver. The keen air flying past the lovers' faces winnowed all care from their hearts, while it brought the flash to their eyes and the wild young blood to their cheeks.

XXIV

THEY reached the city, and Kingdon left Marco in the waiting room at the station while he drove to the stable and left the trap.

During his absence Marco stood looking out of the window; she could not bear to face the crowd in the station, lest some acquaintance should

recognize her in spite of her unrevealing hat and coat. As she gazed through the pane she suddenly perceived the Irishman who had taken her for that memorable drive eight months before.

But was it really the same? He appeared so prosperous, his horses were such strong, sleek animals, and the coach was so glittering and capacious that these changes cast a doubt upon the man's identity.

"It is Rex's doing!" she thought, with a blinding rush of tears. "And all he said when I asked what he had done to help the man was: 'I've only put him in a little better way of making a living.'"

She was deeply affected by this example of Rex's unfailing kindness. Ah, was she not relinquishing the substance for a dark and tantalizing shadow? Would not Rex's wife, even if unloving, be a more fortunate creature than Kingdon's slave?

But at the sight of Kingdon himself striding through the throng, these misgivings vanished. He caught up the suit case, saying:

"We must hurry; it's nearly train time."

"But, Kingdon," she stammered, her face suffused with blushes. "I cannot go another step until— How can I?"

"Oh, I thought we should have time here," apologized Kingdon. "But look at the clock!"

It was indeed twenty-five minutes past nine, and wanted but five minutes to the departure of the Western Express—that very train which the Irish driver had fancied she was intending to take so long ago.

"And we can just as well be married in Leviness," declared Kingdon, "and we needn't go on any farther tonight. I'll only get tickets to that point."

Marco stood helpless. It seemed impossible to start on this night journey with a man neither husband nor brother; yet what could she do? In a moment he had bought the tickets and was passing on to another window to secure seats in a parlor car. She caught him by the arm.

"I won't have you do that," she said sharply. "Do you hear me? I'm not going to do anything to single myself out from the crowd while I'm in such a horrid position. I'll go in a common coach or not at all."

"All right," said Kingdon indifferently. "It's just as you like, of course. There's no need of making a fuss about it."

He checked the suit case, Marco retaining her satchel; they went aboard and found a seat, and presently the train pulled out of the station.

Kingdon sat by her a long time, talking gently and reassuringly; and it was, indeed, necessary, for between the fear that all the ministers in Leviness would be asleep beyond rousing, and that if awakened they would one after another suspect some irregularity in the proceedings and refuse to perform the marriage ceremony, Marco was in a pitiable state. At length Kingdon yielded to a man's irresistible impulse to explore the train, and left her for a time.

A very long time, it seemed to her, reclining with her head against the window frame, her unseeing eyes fixed on the flying blackness of the night. She thought of many things: of Rex—would he marry Mrs. Rowley now? Would he get the legislature to annul the name of Massie Park? Would not his curses follow her, deservedly, in her new life? . . . Of Mrs. Rowley's venomous evil glee. "She will be as glad as a fiend in hell," thought Marco bitterly. "And they will say—people like her—that at heart I was always low, and no better than the class from which I sprung!" . . . Of Kerrigan's anger and shame at the black treachery of the girl he had introduced to his most valued friends. "But the scandal can't possibly hurt him in the election—or can it?" mused Marco miserably. . . . Of Mrs. Wycherley—she would be haughty, smiling, incredulous at first, then shot to the heart by Rex's sorrow. It would be to them such a crushing, unforeseen blow, a sting from a viperous creature they had nursed and caressed.

"Oh, surely we might have managed it better!" she moaned. "We might have told them. They would have forgiven us in time. But now it is forever too late! By this cowardly flight we have built a barricade their love and pity can never cross."

Why, why should Kingdon flee, at all? Was he a hunted man, pursued by the officers of law and justice? Were there, as he had so often hinted, dark deeds in his past, to which the meting out of punishment was only a question of time?

Perhaps he was married already! Perhaps this was the reason he had evaded the ceremony at Wycherley! Did he mean to entice her on, mile after mile, city after city, till, severed utterly from her friends, she would be forced to depend on him, even if she were not his wife? In the dismay of this idea all other terrors were swallowed up.

Oh, how cruel he was to leave her so long alone, a prey to such agonies of fear and self-reproach! So painfully did she realize her own madness and folly, so did she writhe with remorse and shame, that when at last her wild, miserable eyes perceived Kingdon entering the car, she could not at once experience relief nor rise to meet his mood of gay security. He had been drinking, and the perception aroused in her overstrained mind a new dread.

"Kingdon," she said tensely, "if I were sorry now for our running away together—I'm not, of course, I'm not!"

"And you never shall be, my darling!" he said fervently. He pressed her hand between both of his, and only held it the firmer when she strove gently to withdraw it.

"But if I were sorry, you know," she persisted, "would it be possible for me to get a train and return home even now?"

"It would be possible," replied Kingdon, smiling, "all but one thing."

"And what is that?"

"You could reach home if you could make the start—but I will not let you start! I have hold of your hand and I mean to keep it. Otherwise—"

Let me see; we get into Leviness at twelve-thirty, and a train leaves for Wycherley at two. Yes, it might be done, I dare say—but you see, Marco, I won't loose my hand!"

"No, don't," said Marco, striving to be content, but feeling only a biting sense of guilt and wretchedness. It revolted her that Kingdon failed in the forbearance and consideration which her position demanded. There was in his manner an almost insolent familiarity which alarmed her delicacy. The thin veneer of deference in his treatment of her had vanished, and to the raw sensitiveness engendered by her situation every word seemed a covert insult—as if she were his, marriage or no marriage.

"It is not every bride who goes on her wedding trip before the wedding," he laughed.

She flashed a glance of rebuke at him. "You reproach me with everything I do," she complained, "even when you yourself make me do it!"

"Oh, that's part of the game!"

"It's a part I hate, then. It tires me, wears on me. Have you ever held your tongue from saying one sneering, stinging thing because you thought it would hurt me? No, you never have, and you never will!"

"You won't always be so thin-skinned," said Kingdon consolingly.

"Oh, we quarrel every minute we spend together! It's your fault! You have wronged me—you should not have taken this train at all!"

"Oh, come now, Marco, don't be silly. We'll fix everything all right as soon as we strike Leviness. There's a little church right round back of the station, and I suppose the parson lives next door. We'll go there and rout him out. We'll take a carriage—"

"No, let us walk," said Marco. "It is not far, you say, and I should prefer to walk."

"All right—anything to oblige," responded Kingdon. "We can find a hotel afterward and send for the baggage."

"Thank you," said Marco meekly. He had twice granted her request on

minor points, and she was becomingly grateful.

At last, after traversing miles of suburbs, passing hundreds of box cars, freight cars and switch engines, and intersecting the innumerable gleaming tracks of other roads, they entered the vaulted station of Leviness, in whose lofty groinings the smoke hung like a pall and the light became darkness. There was a deafening clamor of brazen bells and rumbling wheels, the trundling of trucks and falling of baggage, harsh shouts, hurrying feet. Leviness was a much larger and more important city than Wycherley, and every inhabitant seemed to be doing his noisy utmost to vindicate the claim of the city to be a hustling, wide awake commercial center. Trolleys rattled along; late revelers and theatergoers strolled by, laughing and chatting; horses pranced and drivers vociferated, to Marco's confusion and bewilderment.

"This way—this way!" said Kingdon, holding her hand securely within his arm. He did not offer to take her satchel, but she was past requiring small courtesies—she wanted only one great right.

They skirted the station, and then she shrank back, perceiving that they must cross track after track lying in shining parallels. The lights now thrilled into blinding luster, now wavered and paled, now blazed steadily, unchanging, always checkering the pavement with violent alternations of glaring white and intense black. Five or six locomotives, standing or cautiously advancing and retreating, fixed baleful yellow eyes on the pair, like caged hungry beasts longing to devour them, while one slow bell had a note of warning in its solemn tolling.

"Oh, what a frightful place!" cried Marco, drawing back. "Why are there not gates here, as in Wycherley?"

"They'll have an overhead crossing sometime," said Kingdon gaily, "only we can't wait for it. But there's no danger—there's a flagman waving, you see. Come on."

"But does he mean us to come on?"

asked Marco, still hesitating. "Oh, I'm afraid—I'm afraid!"

"You kid!" laughed Kingdon. "What are you afraid of? Am I not here?"

They hurried forward. She smiled up into his handsome face; he had never been more dashing, fearless, unconcerned . . .

What had happened? She was conscious only of a rude grasp about her waist that wrenched her off her feet and dragged her backward, stunned, helpless, panting; of a wild, hoarse shriek that echoed above the noises of the night; of a rush of hot, dusty wind, as of a demon sweeping by with flaming nostrils and fierce eyes and black wings dealing death.

Marco put out her hands and felt the arms encircling her; they were big, brawny arms, and it was sweet to rest in their support and know herself alive, unhurt, as if that winged horror had not swooped by at all. After a moment she became aware of a kind, pitying face, and of a helmet and brass buttons.

"You're a policeman," she said after considering.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where—where is my—that gentleman?" she asked.

A murmur of voices answered her, seeming to come from a great way off.

"She doesn't realize, poor girl!"—"Her brother, maybe."—"Sure, he was drunk!"—"It's God's will!"—"Hush, they're bringing him by!"

And the crowd parted to permit the passing through of four men, who bore a stretcher with a ghastly burden. The women sobbed, and some of the men removed their hats, as if the soul had already fled its mutilated dwelling.

It was not Kingdon—surely it could not be Kingdon! The thick uncovered waves of hair were like, very like; but Kingdon's eyes were not so dark, so agonized, nor his face so pinched, nor his voice faint and wistful like this man's as he said:

"Boys, do all you can for me; I want to live!"

XXV

MARCO put her hands to her head and pushed away some officious fingers that were trying to unfasten her veil; then she clung to the friendly arms again.

"I must go wherever he does!" she said, shivering.

"Oh, of course, ma'am," the policeman replied, and steadying her steps as if she had been a little child, he led her across the street after the mournful procession, and into the great square office of a hotel. Here someone else—she was past seeing or caring who—took charge of her, conducted her to a parlor, and after a few sympathetic murmurs left her alone.

Presently a maid came and offered her services, for not only were the injured man's belongings discovered to be fine and costly but they were marked with a distinguished surname, and it behooved the manager of the hotel to treat with extreme consideration the lady under his escort.

Marco impatiently dismissed the girl, and sat staring at the wall, sick with terror and unavailing pity.

So this was the end of it all! She remembered Margaret in the old play:

Nor mother, wife nor England's queen.

And now she herself was no longer

Rex's bride-elect nor yet the wife of Kingdon; she would not even be a widow; she was nothing to anybody—a mere wrecked vessel, hopelessly adrift between two unattainable shores. Oh, if they had only been married before leaving Wycherley it would not be quite so bad! But now she was disgraced forever. Who would believe that they had ever meant to be married at all—or that this was the first time she had been away with Kingdon?

"Oh, Kingdon, darling, why cannot I die, too?" she moaned. "They couldn't blame us then, and we should be beyond it, anyway! But now—now I shall have to face everything alone!"

From the very first she had expected that Kingdon's injuries would prove mortal; yet when she became aware that a gentleman was standing before

her gravely explaining the patient's condition, she found herself scarce able to comprehend him. Was Kingdon, then, only a patient? It seemed as if those frightful expressions, "shock"—"loss of blood"—"both legs crushed above the knees"—"inevitably fatal," could not possibly apply to Kingdon, but to some stranger, some poor cringing wretch in whom life had never at the best leaped vivid, swift, exuberant. She made an effort, however, to answer the doctor intelligently.

"I suppose," she said timidly, "that amputation will be necessary?"

The doctor looked surprised. "Oh, dear, no! I thought I had fully explained," he said gently. "We were fortunate in securing the most eminent surgeons of the city at once, and they concur in the opinion that the patient should not be needlessly disturbed. It is but a question of a few moments now," he added gravely.

"A few moments!" gasped Marco. "Oh, I must see him—I must, I must!" she cried wildly. Kingdon was always so strong, so masterful; perhaps he could take her with him out of all her trouble!

At that moment a white-capped nurse entered the room. "Mr. Wycherley desires to see you," she said, addressing Marco. "He mentioned no name."

"Hurry, then, hurry—let us go to him!" said Marco feverishly. But she could not rise from her chair, and they had to help her to her feet and down the corridor to the suite of rooms allotted to Kingdon. The nurse would have taken her satchel, but she clutched it as if this relic of her past had in it some virtue to sustain her in the present.

They went into a sitting room, where several men were standing about talking in low tones. Marco passed among them with tottering limbs and drooping head. At the bedroom door they were met by another nurse, who remained with Marco's conductors in the outer room.

"He wishes to see you alone," she

whispered; "but don't be afraid—we'll all be right here if you want anything."

"I don't believe I shall want anything," said Marco with sudden firmness. She had felt at the first glimpse of the bed and the rigid shape upon it that she must not look to Kingdon for help and comfort. It was for her to support him through the final ordeal.

She hastily removed her hat and gloves and advanced to the bedside. She would not shudder when she laid her warm fingers on his cold, lax, blanched hand, nor let her eyes falter away from his white face, so changed, so piteously changed!

"I was afraid," said the dying man, his lips scarcely moving, "that you'd be all broken up."

"No," said Marco quietly. "I thought perhaps I could do something for you. Are you suffering?"

"No—not now. They put something on. What time is it?"

"Half past one."

"Time enough," muttered Kingdon. Ah, what was time to him, who stood on the brink of eternity!

Marco stroked the damp hair and wiped the cold sweat from his brow. The faint, weak murmur went on.

"Got your bag all right?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good!" said Kingdon. He closed his eyes and lapsed into silence; when he spoke again his voice was so exhausted that she had to bend very low to catch his words.

"I've loosed your hand, after all, Marco," he breathed.

"I don't know what you mean, dear," she said tenderly.

"Why, don't you remember? I said I wouldn't let you go back. But it's different now; and you must go back!"

"But can I?" she gasped.

"Sure, you can—and you must. If you don't you're a ruined woman."

"I don't care; I won't leave you!"

"No, you needn't go just yet—not until—" He fought back the shadows gathering about him and went on:

"But don't hang around here—after I— It'll do no good. You'll go, won't you?"

"I cannot, I cannot!"

"You'll get back without scath or scorn, as if you'd never been away," said Kingdon, his eyes, over which a film was creeping, never leaving hers one instant.

"To marry Rex!" she said bitterly. "Oh, my love, my darling, surely you cannot wish me to do that!" she cried in irrepressible reproach.

He stared up at her, not comprehending. It was as if some dark, stern yet benign angel stood at his bedside, waving away all earthly passions, forbidding them to vex and harry the departing spirit.

"I only mean," said Marco very softly, awed by the remoteness of his soul, "that I have wronged Rex so!"

"But that's your affair, not mine!" and the trace of his old impatience was heartrending to hear. "I have my own account to settle. And I think if I can get you back home—without their knowing—and no harm done at all—that it will be a little easier for me—by and by—when God—" He broke off abruptly, but the terror, the yearning in his dimmed eyes pleaded more sharply than words.

"Oh, I promise—I promise! I will go!" cried Marco.

"The train goes at two. You have money? Yes? They called up Rex, you know. Don't leave any gloves here, nor anything to betray you. I can't—I can't seem to think what you'll do in the morning, Marco," he said, and there was a scared, miserable quaver in his voice as if he realized at last how spent he was, how powerless to further any scheme, however good.

"Don't worry, love," said Marco steadfastly. "I shall get back all right, never fear. No one shall suffer because you loved me."

"That's good," whispered Kingdon, quite content. "I'll tell God that—and perhaps it will be easier. Don't you think so, Marco?"

"Oh, I'm sure, I'm sure of it!" said

the girl fervently. She stooped to kiss his forehead; its piercing coldness struck to her heart. Again and again she wiped away the death dews, caressing his beautiful hair and murmuring low blessings.

Once more he spoke, in a frightened, broken whisper.

"Are the lights out, Marco? I can't see you any more. And I'm—I'm afraid now!"

"I'm here, darling, right beside you," said Marco clearly, clasping the clammy fingers tighter—and oh, the feeble, pitiful attempt at a returning pressure! "I'm close by you, love, and I won't leave you, not for an instant. Oh, I wish I could do something for you!"

"If—if you could pray, Marco! I know it isn't in your line, but—" His voice trailed off into indistinctness.

"Oh, yes, yes, anything, anything!" cried Marco, sinking to her knees and pouring out her heart in prayer, humble yet confident, begging the Father to welcome His lost child, beseeching the great Judge to pardon the poor human creature all his misdoings; and upon that wild tide of passionate entreaty the soul of Kingdon Wycherley floated out to meet its Maker.

Marco rose to her feet, staggering, trying to quench her tears and to quell her sobs. She kissed Kingdon's hair and his hand again; life had too lately left his body for it to be terrible.

"I must go—I must go!" she kept saying to herself. "Is there nothing, nothing more I can do for him?" she cried wildly. "No—only to get home as he wished!"

She glanced at her watch in a sudden panic lest she had delayed too long. It lacked but six minutes of train time. She gazed once more at the ashen face.

"Good-bye then, love," she said, and turned firmly away. She put on her hat swiftly, wound the veil about it, caught up her gloves and bag, opened a door opposite to that by which she had entered, and found herself in a lighted corridor which happened to be empty. Like a swallow she darted

through it, reaching a flight of stairs, at the foot of which was an outer door; running quickly down, she opened the door and found herself in the brilliant, deserted street.

XXVI

SHE stood an instant, dazed, doubtful in which direction the station lay; but not daring to linger, she hastened to the nearest corner, and there across the street loomed the great building, the snorting and hissing of the engines audible. She ran over, and entering, glanced at the clock.

Only one minute left!

"Ticket to Wycherley," she said, putting a bill on the window shelf.

"Here you are—hustle now!" said the agent, pushing out a slip of paper and the change. She swept them up and ran out to the train. A porter was just picking up the stool at the steps of the rear coach.

"Your berth check, miss?" he said.

"Oh, I haven't any!" cried Marco, distressed. "I was going in a common car."

"None on this train, miss. Sorry!"

"I must go, anyway!" said Marco, thrusting upon him the change she still held. At that instant the bell, far ahead in the misty depths of the night, began to ring solemnly; the porter helped Marco up, swung himself on and they were off.

"If I can't go in a common coach," said Marco, after reflection, "I think I'll take a stateroom."

The porter stared at this transition of her desires from simplicity to extravagance, and his pleasant black face broke into a grin.

"All right, miss; guess Ah kin suit you," he said respectfully. "Want your berth made up?"

"No—oh, no!" said Marco, and he unlocked a door, ushered her into a tiny room and left her in privacy.

She sank into a seat and burst into bitter weeping, tore off her hat, thrust her fingers into her hair and rocked to and fro in a very abandonment of grief.

"Oh, alone—alone at last!" she sobbed. "The first, last time that I can mourn for you, Kingdon, my love! For if I do get back I shall never be alone any more—and I must never cry—nor let them suspect anything!"

The odor of iodoform, which she had not consciously perceived in the death chamber, now with a tardy grewsomeness assailed her senses; and a few slight blood spots, which she had scarce noticed on the white coverlet, now came dancing before her drenched eyes, throbbing, expanding, staining all the earth with their horrid redness.

She thought of that still object lying on the bed in the hotel behind her. Oh, the immeasurable distance between that and Kingdon, gay, stalwart, handsome Kingdon, who but two hours ago had been her leader, her lover, almost her husband!

"Surely we are punished far too heavily," she moaned. "What had he ever done that needed his life to pay for it? And I—was ever a girl's folly and caprice so cruelly requited? Why did I play with fire? If I could have foreseen this night, I would have hushed the first word he ever spoke to me!"

She thought of her friends, not calmly sleeping—no, for they had been telephoned. Perhaps they, in turn, had called up Green Gem! At that thought she all but gave up in despair. But no; she knew Rex so well; he would not allow her to be roused and startled in the night.

And somewhere, she reflected, they would meet, she and Rex, and tear past each other in the darkness; for by this time Rex was pushing his fastest car to its top speed on the way to Leviness. Kingdon would not much longer lie unbrothered in that alien city.

Oh, if it were permitted her to get home in safety, all her life should be a service of thanksgiving! Never lived wife more loyal than she would be! Many women recompense themselves for an innocent and unemotional girlhood by reckless betrayals after marriage; but her own evil deeds were done.

"I have sown my wild oats," she thought. "No man will ever again have power to tempt me. Oh, my lost darling, don't think I haven't loved you!" She pressed her cheek against the pane and gazed out into the pitchy night, as if some essence that had once been Kingdon were flying abreast of her and could hear her. "I *did* love you, darling; I threw everything to the winds for that love! But now that it's all of no avail, forgive me if I try to get a little salvage out of the wreck!"

Thus she justified herself, even as if Kingdon in dying had not said: "It will be easier for me." Those words seemed to her but a false assumption of selfishness; he had said them, she told herself, only because such an appeal would soonest move her to do what would "make it easier" for her also.

A long time she spent in these confused and miserable musings. At last, glancing at her watch, she saw that it was four o'clock. In less than an hour they would be in Wycherley station. She made a rapid calculation, and found that if she walked out home she could not arrive till broad daylight, at an hour when the caretakers in the park, the men of the stables and garage, the servants at the great house and her little maid Verna, would all be up and about, and a futile attempt would certainly have been made to call her to the telephone.

A carriage or taxicab was out of the question; not only would she be too late even in that case, but she shrank from the necessary taking into her confidence of the driver or chauffeur, who in all probability would know her by sight and would never have done pointing her out on the street, saying: "There goes the girl who sneaked out to Wych Elms the morning after Don Wycherley was killed in Leviness. She's married to Rex now, and I suppose everything's all right; but there was something queer about the business!"

No, no! She must not run any such risk. She must make them stop the train at Thorne's Crossing.

Then she glanced about the luxurious room with its mirrors and silken hangings, and it dawned upon her that this was not the kind of train to be flagged from the roadside and ordered to stop at any passenger's will. She realized that they had not paused for one instant's breathing space since leaving Leviness. Was it likely that any prayer of hers could cause Thorne's Crossing to be honored by a halt?"

At this new difficulty her heart seemed to collapse within her, and she began to shake as if with cold. Suddenly she drew her dressing case upon her lap, remembering that it contained a flask of brandy full to the brim. She rang for a glass of water, and when the porter brought it she mixed a little with some of the liquor in her tiny tumbler. It was a good, stiff drink, and scorched her throat as she swallowed; but it enabled her to pull herself together and to form a plan of action. She bathed her face, put on her things, counted her money, leaving nothing in her purse but her latchkey, rang once more, and desired the train conductor to be summoned to her.

When he came he proved to be a large man with quick, decided motions and a keen, eaglelike glance, but withal an expression of rosy kindness.

"I want you to stop at Thorne's Crossing," Marco began.

He gave her a look of humorous affront and shook his head.

"I know you don't ever, but couldn't you just this once?" she pleaded.

"My dear young lady, you know this is the angels' train—the flyer!"

"I have some money—over a hundred dollars," she persisted. "Take it—I beg you to take it, and stop for me!"

"Not for love or money," he said, trying to look severe and incorruptible, "and scarcely for life or death!"

"But you could do it, couldn't you?" asked the girl. "And it would be only an instant—there would be no danger!"

"Yes, I suppose I *could* do it," he said slowly, rubbing his chin and thinking how big and dark her eyes

looked behind the white chiffon; "and there's no danger, to be sure. But consider! I should have to report the stoppage and its cause at the office. Could I say, 'The woman tempted me'? That excuse didn't work very well with Adam!"

"Listen," said Marco. "We're crossing a trestle now, are we not? I thought so. Well, sir, I might as well fling myself out of the train down among the rocks and never stir again as go on into the Wycherley station!"

Her voice quivered and broke into a sob; her veiled eyes were tragic. The man would have sworn that no wickedness had brought her to this pass, yet he said sternly:

"For aught I know the detectives may be there watching for you."

"Oh, no, no!" she protested earnestly. "I'm a fool, but not a criminal—I've never injured anyone! Oh, sir, please let me off, and God will prosper and reward you, and will have mercy on you if ever you should need it as I need it now!"

The conductor was touched. "There's sure to be a damned spotter on the train," he mused. "Perhaps," he added quietly, "you're one yourself."

"A spotter?" said Marco vaguely. "I'm not, indeed—I don't even know what you mean. Oh, sir, if it were your sister, would you like her whole life to be ruined because of an hour's weakness? And not only one life, but the lives of people a hundred times better and dearer! I have not been wicked, only unstable and unwise; yet I shall be punished worse than any murderess if you don't let me off at Thorne's Crossing!"

"Well, I'll do it," said the conductor, drawing a mighty breath of resolution. "Brackett, though—that's the engineer—will be struck all of a heap. And what can I say at the office? You wouldn't dare swing off when we slowed up just short of a dead halt, would you?"

"Indeed, I would dare!"

"There's a good, hard roadbed of cinders between the tracks, and day is breaking, so it's not pitch dark. But it's a risk for you."

"No; I'm as light as a bird."

"You see, every galoot on board wakes with a jerk if we stop," he explained, glancing at his watch. "Well, we'll be there in five minutes."

"Yes, I know."

"All right, then. Be ready. I'll be back in a moment." He left her, but soon came hurrying back, and presently they were out in the vestibule. She pressed the roll of bills into his hand.

"Take it, to square Brackett," she said softly. "And you yourself—take my gratitude and blessings!"

"All right," said the conductor with assumed gruffness. He unlocked the door and assisted her down to the lowest step, himself standing on the step above, holding her hand tight. It seemed to her that they were still rushing along with inconceivable swiftness. The wind smote her face and dragged at her garments, and the very earth, black and formless, so terribly, unattainably far beneath, seemed to rise and fall like sea billows, only more stony and pitiless, waiting to mangle their hapless victims.

"Aren't we going awfully fast yet?" she asked, with a quailing heart.

"We're only creeping. Don't be afraid. You'll get off all right."

Her courage rose suddenly. "Say when I'm to jump!"

"Don't jump at all—just step, with the train, but pretty far out." He loosed her hand. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

"Now!"

One foot after the other struck the ground solidly and hard; she ran a yard or so, dizzy and staggering, then waved a triumphant hand at the kind face she could no longer see, but which she knew was peering anxiously at her from the train, for a moment a lessening square, then gulfed, all but one ruby spark, in the gray-black shadows of the dawn.

Safe! Safe—with only the last mile of the hundred of her journey to accomplish! Bravely she set off down the road toward home, shivering, but not with the morning's chill only; trees

and shrubs, ghostly in the dawn, mocked and giped at her, and once when a bramble caught upon her veil she all but screamed in affright.

Just inside the grounds there was a rustling of the fallen leaves, and something came bounding toward her out of the gloom. It was a dog—Kingdon's dog. How often had she seen him petted by those hands now lying so moveless there in Leviness! She stopped and patted him, and he laid his head against her cloak and whined piteously. Then he raised his eyes to her face, looked sadly at her and gave a long, bitter howl.

"My God! He knows!" said Marco faintly. "But how does he know?" And her teeth chattered.

She hushed the creature and got away from him, and hastened along that very carriage way down which she had driven the evening before. Was it possible that her absence all those eight hours had been undiscovered?

Now the little house was in sight, shrouded in the mysterious silence and obscurity of dawn; now she stood within the porch, taking the key from her purse; now she had let herself in and was creeping upstairs with bated breath and dilated eyes. What if at this last moment some door should gape open and an accusing presence should confront her, as she stood there caught, convicted, shame written on her face?

Now she cautiously opened the door of her bedroom, swiftly entered, noiselessly shut the door and turned the key; now she stood in the middle of the room, staring wildly about at the dear familiar objects, unable to realize that by the grace of God she had won safe home at last!

After a moment she dropped slowly to her knees; her eyes closed, and slowly she sank forward and still forward, till at last she lay along the floor in a deep swoon.

XXVII

It was broad day when she opened her weary eyes. She listened, and heard a sound of low singing. Verna

was already up and at work. There was no time to be lost.

She was sick at heart and stiff in every limb; the throb of the train was still in her head, and frightful images hung before her eyes. But she forced herself to rise. She put away her dressing case and the outside garments she had worn, rapidly undressed, bathed her face and hands and put on her night-dress. Then she unlocked the door and crept into bed.

She lay shivering in that soft, chilly nest, exhausted, yet believing that like Macbeth she had murdered sleep, when lo, it fell upon her, benign, assuaging, and wrought a miracle of rest and healing, hushing at last her fitful sobs and starts and lulling her into the deep, dreamless repose of happy infancy.

So it fell that when Mrs. Wycherley came into the room, drew aside the curtains and let in the sunlight, Marco still lay in rosy slumber, her breathing as even as a child's.

Regina's eyes, unwontedly grave and anxious, dwelt upon the sleeping girl steadily.

"Marco, dear, wake up," she said softly.

Marco roused a little, smiled drowsily and pushed away the soft masses of hair from her warm, pink cheeks.

"What time is it?" she asked. "Oh! Mrs. Wycherley!"

"It is eight o'clock," said Regina, "and I am here because there is some dreadful news I must tell you, Marco." Her soul was in her eyes as she watched the girl upon whom Rex's joy depended. Had her fancy been taken at all by Rex's shallow, showy cousin? No secret would be proof against this surprise, this springing of a trap, and the mother would know what warrant there was for her boy's weal.

"What is the news?" asked Marco sleepily, seeming to try to settle her half-roused attention upon the matter. In reality, she could scarce keep from screaming out the words herself.

"It is this: Kingdon left here last night; but he got only as far as Leviness. He was killed, Marco—killed, do you understand? They telephoned at

midnight that he was hurt, and at two that he was dead. But Rex had already started in the racing car."

"Poor Rex!" Marco murmured. "What a dreadful errand for him!" She did not choose her answer; some instinct put the words in her mouth.

Regina breathed a thanksgiving. Her son's happiness was in safe and worthy hands, after all. And though in a few moments Marco seemed to realize the hideous fatality more fully, and with tears running down her cheeks openly mourned for the poor lad who had been [so handsome and light-hearted, yet nothing could alter the fact that her first impulsive thought had been of Rex and not of that other.

So life flowed on again as if it had not been interrupted by a night of horror, though to Marco each day seemed to be wrapped in a clinging red shroud, as if those crimson stains had spread far and wide, dyeing the whole earth to their sanguine hue, and though her ears rang ever with the clang of bells, the roar of wheels, a shriek, a rattling in the throat.

But no one knew; no one should ever know! At first perhaps she had had visions of the sweetness of confession, a longing to lay her head on some friendly breast and sigh out her story in a heavenly relief; but she put them away. It was not her secret only. They should not lay this last sin, though uncommitted, to poor Kingdon's charge.

And there was need for forbearance in regard to his misdeeds. Nearly a thousand dollars was found in his wallet; he had obtained the money by forging Rex's cheque the day he went away. And Leila recalled to Marco's mind the story of Nina Cheseldine, and told of the recognition in the park and of Louis's letter; and as Marco listened she blushed for her hero.

"But oh, how I regret my share in his death!" lamented Leila. "How I wish I had let him alone!"

"Don't cry," said Marco languidly. "Perhaps," she added with a certain hardness, "it is just as well that he died now as later. I don't believe

he would ever have done any good or made anyone happy."

Leila kissed her. "I am glad you can see it as we do," she said quietly.

There was a stately funeral at the mansion, followed by the emptiness of the dwelling that all of us know, when it seems as if the house were a void never to be filled up and cease its ghostly echoing, though but one object has been taken from it.

The three women, sad and listless, were gathered about the fire in the library at Wych Elms the day after the funeral.

"At the time of the accident," Mrs. Wycherley said, "there was a young woman with poor Don."

Marco, lying on a couch, held her breath, but ventured not so much as to utter one word.

"She met him at the train when he reached Leviness," Regina went on. "The reporters thought they could hunt her down and get a statement, but Rex prevented them, I don't know how, and the papers did not mention her."

"Ah! Rex did not know whom he was protecting," thought Marco.

"But she did not desert him; she followed him to the hotel, and was alone with him when he died."

"She was brave and womanly," said Leila warmly, "and I honor her for it, whoever she was."

"And I, too," said Regina; and then they spoke no more of that unknown girl in Leviness who had been so brave and sisterly.

At last came a day to poor tortured Marco when it no longer seemed as if her heart lay bare and bleeding in her bosom, when her aching nerves grew tranquil, when her power for suffering was spent and the life that stretched before loomed not so impossible.

The strange red haze faded away, and she saw that the sun was shining in a sky of clear blue. Hope stirred in her breast like the first low warble of a fledgeling bird.

And none too soon came this change, for there lacked but three days of the wedding. Rex had refused to hear a word as to its postponement; strictly

private and quiet it might be, but in some fashion it must be at the appointed time.

Late in the afternoon of this first day of remission from anguish, Rex asked Marco to walk with him, and they strolled along under the golden trees, ankle deep in mellow, yellow strippage, whose aromatic scent filled the soft, stirless air.

"You are looking better, dearest," said Rex cheerfully. She returned his examining gaze. Yes, he was handsome, and his face was calm and strong; it was a stronger and happier face by far than he had worn the night they first met. And he was hers, still hers!

"Are you bewitched?" smiled Rex. "Why do you plumb my soul and fail to reply when I say you are looking better?"

"Oh, did you say so? Yes, I am better. It has been a dreadful time; but the worst is over."

"It has been hard for you, darling."

"For me?" said Marco, with a startled glance. "Surely for us all!"

"I said for you, Marco," he insisted gently. "I saw, dear, that you were very fond of Kingdon."

She began to cry softly, but not in sorrow—in the blessed relief of hearing him speak of her fault as if it were known and not deemed past forgiveness.

"If he had lived," said Rex, "I don't know how it would have ended. Perhaps you and I would have been parted."

She clung to him, weeping, thankful that he was still her haven of refuge.

"But he is gone, poor Don, and gone are my doubts and fears. It

is over and done with. The future is mine."

"All, all!"

"And I've only told you that I know, darling, so that you may understand how much I love you. You are my own girl still. There is happiness in store for us, Marco, isn't there?"

"Not only in store, but here, now, this instant!" she said fervently. "For you have the largest heart, and the truest and tenderest that ever beat, and I rest content upon it!"

And as he took her in his arms she laid her head on his breast and they stood in a solemn silence.

"This doesn't look much like happiness," said Rex at last, touching her wet, white cheek.

"Oh, but I *am* happy, though!" she said, smiling. "And I shan't cry any more, dear."

They had paused on the brow of a gentle declivity facing the west, where the sun was sinking, magnificently large and brilliant, in a sky of clear, bright amber yellow, while in the zenith hung a few pink clouds. In all this warm color the girl's face took on a vivid tint, and she looked rosily happy.

"Do you remember that fancy of mine about each day having its own color?" she asked. "These last days have been dark, dark beyond any words of telling, even if I wished to try. But that darkness has passed away—oh, I believe and hope, forever—and this day is all golden!"

Rex kissed the lifted radiant face passionately. "My sweet, my wife!" he said. "But the day is closing now."

"Not for me!" smiled Marco. "It is only dawning!"



NO stunts of social brutality surpass those achieved by the well bred block-head.



GOD created the coquette as soon as he had made the fool.

THE LITTLE BOOKS

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

THIS book is but a simple minstrel come
To sing his songs to you,
And if he please you—then the merest crumb
Of gratitude his due.

And if he please you not when all is said,
Why, bid the singing cease;
Only, I pray you, smiling, shake your head
And let him go in peace.

II

A book is like a garden spot
(Its maker plants betimes),
Where moods a-row and fancies blow,
And little fragrant rhymes.

And some there be who pluck herein
A posy for their needs,
And some who find for roses twined
But dust and stones and weeds.

III

As many little books there be
As little leaves in spring.
(And each one doubtless thinks the tree
Made by his blossoming!)

Yet if there came no leaves at all,
A sorry thing were spring,
Where never winds were musical
Nor sheltered birds might sing.



SOCIETY is composed of two great classes—those who have more dinners than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinners.

THE CARRADINE SISTERS

By EDNA KENTON

SEIDEL'S HALL, on Third Avenue, was jammed as usual by ten o'clock. All the lights glared gaudily, and pallid waiters rushed perspiringly from table to table. In the rear of the low-browed room two important fat-jowled men held back a throng of spectators who persistently crowded forward. Down in front the orchestra—piano, bass viol, violin, French horn, and drum—were hurtling through the score with feverish speed, while on the minute stage whose level coincided with that of the open-boweled piano, and whose "set" was of a nature that does not conflict with any fire law, four pink-skirted girls threw themselves and were thrown about with eruptive force. Suddenly, with one bellowing crash, the music stopped, and the dancers, with a merely perfunctory nod, ran off. Simultaneously the orchestra withdrew for sustenance to carry it through the long intermission that was as much a part of the program at Seidel's as the stage performance, and the hum of talk and laughter rose to rank confusion.

Back behind, in a breathless room hung on two sides with dingy red curtains, the Carradine Sisters dropped wearily.

"They was two silk hats in front tonight," at length observed Mag of the Carradines, between clenched teeth that worried savagely at a knot to loosen it. "Listen to 'em stompin' yet! I hope to die we don't have to go on again—I'm that muscle-bound. Lide, you come down again on th' small o' my spine like you dropped tonight, and th' equestrian stunt 'll be cut out. What's got into Seidel—what *did* ketch him tonight? The house's gone crazy be-

fore, but he never pushed us back for a whole repeat— What you laughin' at, Jac?"

"At Seidel!" gurgled Jac, the midget of the Carradines. "It was them two silk hats put the rollers under him tonight. I'd run up with a raincoat round me for a cheese sandwich—sure, I didn't have no dinner tonight—when he come puffin' up to the counter. 'Sam!' he says, like that— 'Sam! They's two Fift' Av'noo swells here that's heard of our show. They wants two beers and some ham sandwiches. Fix up their plates tasty—put on half a dozen oluves as *well* as dills, an' cut 'em good, thick slices o' ham.' Gee! He hung over them two plates like it was a layout f'r a sick king, and Sam he winked at me, an' laid on the pickles an' the oluves and th' red peppers an' parsley till he had them ham sandwiches lookin' like chromos. It was them silk hats that got us our double turn tonight, you can bet; for we're th' only act in the rotten show, an' he knows it."

"Others have clapped," said Mag sourly, "and we was never sent back like this before."

"Gammerdinger's Lin'ment's good for your back," remarked Josie, leader of the Carradines. "I saw 'em, too. Say, don't a evenin' suit o' clothes look different, accordin' to the fellow that's inside it? There's Seidel and there's them two! I wisht we had some silk stockin's for our act. Sometimes it seems a pity they's four of us. Belle Whitney does her singin' act alone, an' she's flashin' a pair o' new ones tonight."

"She needs 'em to draw attention

from her voice—*an'* her face," said Mag. "Anyway, she's took to the ankle length skirts, and thata way you can buy 'em f'r as cheap as eighty-nine cents—the kind you got to piece out with an old pair to haul 'em up over the knees. But for us that need all but tights, if we have 'em at all—you know like I do that dough all round ain't possible."

"Why, we *know* it," assented Josie. "I was just *wishin'*. Might have that much fun—"

"Wish this pink cotton back satin clean then," said Jac. "I wisht all them cleanin' flooids was in th' East River. I bought a new kind last night, an' it ain't done a bit o' good—"

She stopped. Outside, beyond the dingy red curtains, sounded three distinct raps. Jac, the irrepressible, giggled. Then, as the curtains parted in response to Mag's "Come," she got to her feet with a little gasp, and stood facing the two "silk hats." Seidel's was in the main a decent, *Himmel* fearing German family concert hall, and whatever Johnnies it boasted were not after the type of these wanderers from a strange and unknown avenue.

"Look here," said the shorter silk hat abruptly. "This your last turn to-night? Well, can we get you off for an hour or two—to help fill in a bill up at the Metrahattan Club? Annual Ladies' Night. Here are our cards. I'm Sinclair—he's Sykes. It's a motor car there and back to wherever you want to go, and a hundred dollars for three-quarter's of an hour's work. Yes?"

"O' course, anybody'd think of Seidel's first to pick a turn from," said Lide, amazed but cool. "This sorta thing happens back behind here every night. But where is this club?"

The tall silk stepped forward. "Now this is on the level," the young man beneath it said earnestly. "Sykes and I sidestepped our share of committee work for the vaudeville tonight, and the other mucker got even by getting up an amateur bunch from Fourteenth Street, and telling them to give us a dress rehearsal. Even that might have gone if Sykes here hadn't made a speech

beforehand, taking all the credit for the all-star bill he thought was coming on. It was a merry scramble of eggs, and it ended by our being thrown out of the club under orders not to return without a novelty that would sweep the town."

He paused to mop his brow while Sykes added:

"We were making for a show down on the Bowery that was tipped off to us, when we saw a crowd in front there fighting for first place and show—some fellow said the Carradines went on at ten—and we beat it through the crowd. You did the rest; your turn's immense—great! Why aren't you inside the city limits instead of being tucked away in this cow pasture?"

Mag, the prettiest and friest of the Carradines, glowered, and her lips parted for speech. But Lide hushed her.

"Shut up, Mag," she said. "This ain't no time for private grouches. Say, we can't go. I'm mighty sorry, but we can't go."

"Everybody knows the Metrahattan, you know," said Sykes persuasively, "and for the rest—" He took out a well rounded pocketbook and counted out one hundred in fives before eight attentive eyes. Suddenly Jac sank to the floor.

"Oh, I wisht to *goodness* we had us some silk stockin's!" she wailed.

"Well, we ain't got 'em," Josie jerked out. "But them that has ain't been picked for this. Anyway, what's the use? No, it ain't a matter o' silk stockin's nor nothin' like it that's holdin' us. It's our contract—that's what's the matter with all of us. We got a contract to play at Seidel's, and nowhere else, rehearsals or nothin'—and we can't."

"Who's Seidel?" asked Sykes. "That dumpling that slipped us back here? Well, we'll talk figures two minutes with him, and *that's* all right. What else?"

Again the Carradines glanced uncertainly at each other.

"It's this way," said Josie at last: "Seidel ain't got nothin' to do with the real contract—we're only farmed out

to him, understand? It's another man that's holdin' us, and he's so rich you couldn't offer him money enough to fix it so we'd get a cent over the twenty Seidel pays us. And he can squeeze Seidel like a bug—and will—any time he breaks over—and there you are!"

Sinclair looked at Sykes. "You're the nearest thing to a lawyer here, Jimmy," he said in graceful resignation, and sat down upon the Carradines' dressing table.

"This looks like peonage," said Sykes. "Who holds this contract?"

The Carradines sought courage again from each other's eyes and found it not.

"I'd rather not tell," said Josie. "Fact is, we don't dare tell."

"Well, whoever he is, he's got you bluffed four ways from the ace," said Sykes. "There are contracts and contracts, you know. Some hold, and some don't. Where a contract means slavery for the party of the second part, it's not—"

"Great address," interrupted Sinclair. "But time's flying, and if we make good tonight we've got to move across town soon."

"How did this man come to make this contract with you?" asked Sykes interestedly, and it merely chanced that his eyes rested on Mag, who glowered again. He addressed her comprehendingly. "He was trying to put up some little game, was he?"

"Beast!" Mag flashed. "And we'd signed before we got wise. Since then, for a year, he's farmed us out, 'stead o' pushing us as he vowed he'd do, making the four of us live off what Seidel pays us—and us tied up for ten years, and old women 'fore we get us a chance to play our own game again!"

"Not on your life!" said Sykes lightly. "Got your contract? All right; show it to some good lawyer tomorrow—fees and costs included in tonight's terms. You don't need to play at Seidel's any more—there's a manager up there to night. Come on—I dare you—just as you are. Bully for you!"

He caught the Carradines' surrender before they sensed it. Finally Josie drew a long breath.

"Fightin' an' losin' can't be worse than this," she said. "We'll have to sneak. How'll we get our lead sheets? Say, you'll have to slip that grip yonder a quarter; tell him to swipe the Carradine music from the racks—the orchestra's out sousin' yet. Gee, don't give him a fiver—anybody'll do anything round here for thirty cents. A hundred dollars and a chance to fight! And a chance to run in 'At Rehearsal' and one o' your songs, Jac! Lord, we ain't got th' music— Wait till I see that conductor, an' see if he'd crab a song just because he didn't have the notes. Pick out one that ain't choked to death with minors, an' I reckon he c'd worry through hitting chords now and then till he fell for it. Come on, kids. It's a dare!"

Fifteen minutes later, in a luxurious dressing room on a level with the Metra-hattan stage, Josie spoke again, as she powdered her small nose violently.

"Look here," she said to Sykes, "tell your leader we got sheets for pi-anna, bass viol, violin and trumpet. Drummer o' course. An orchestra o' twenty. Gee! Well, fifteen of 'em can go get a drink. Here's the lead sheets, and this is goin' to be the dickens, not rehearsin' a bar. You said he was quick on the signal? Well, even at that I'll have to pass him hints over th' foots now and then."

"Now listen. Have 'em begin 'Dream o' Love' right away, an' keep at it till we signal for the 'hurry' music. Listen. Tell th' drummer we come on with a row o' flips, and to crash as we go up, not as we come down. Don't forget that. Then, when we're in a row before th' foots, tell 'em to switch *instanter* to 'I Ast Her for a Flower She Had Kissed.' Th' rest'll have to take care o' itself. Say, tell him that in the 'Rehearsal' stunt th' dialogue'll tip him, an' to give us 'Lace Hankashiff' or 'Turkey in th' Straw' as they seem called for. That's all you can remember, and more'n they can. Gee," as the door closed upon the burdened Sykes, "I thought a hundred was a heap o' money, but I've earned it in distress a'ready."

"I wisht we had some silk stockin's!" moaned Jac. "It's just our luck that two o' the lisle threads went bust last night, and so we all got on some tubin' tonight that was ten cents at the five and ten cent store!"

"We're the shabby bunch," assented Mag philosophically, as she smoothed down the dingy front of her pink satin bodice and tried not to see the fresh pink walls that flung their shabbiness into unbeautiful relief. "Signal 'em, Josie; th' water's cold, and standin' in it waitin' don't warm it."

Another moment, and out in front, before the pampered audience to whom on this selfsame stage some of the greatest had played, the Carradine Sisters came, with a row of flips apiece that brought them upright at the same instant in a smiling row before the footlights. They were a forlorn little team, standing against a freshly painted drop that revealed with unneedful clarity the futility of the cleaning fluids and the coarseness of the cotton stockings. But something in the four eager faces caught wandering eyes, and once caught, held them. Already the conductor had dropped the "hurry" music with a stupendous crash and a nod of encouragement that endeared him to the Carradines, and flung his men headlong into the "Flower" song. And there was not the slightest doubt, after the first three bars of the dance music, that the Carradines could dance. Their ballet slippers were not only soiled but the soles were worn; yet after the first startled moment of adjustment to the unexpected, the forlornity only added to the interest, and applause for good work came quickly.

There was a rapid fire turn, and another song and dance, and then "At Rehearsal" was tried out. One of Jac's songs was introduced, and the intelligent conductor, though minus music, did not "crab" it. "At Rehearsal" in fact was fast turning into a mutual frolic, when a slight confusion arose at the rear of the little theater, and suddenly a thick, angry voice rose high above the music.

"I'll jail 'em, I swear it! I've got

their contract down in black and white, with all their names to it, and they've broken it flat. I'll jail 'em, watch me! All four—"

Jac was singing the last stanza of her song, with the other three dancing cleverly behind her. Josie danced away toward Sykes, standing in the first entrance, where he had stood ever since he had made his little speech which insured consideration for the Carradines even though none might be given *him*. "It's that beast, Murray!" she gasped. "He's here—the man who tied us up for ten years. He *will* jail us, too—"

"Forget it!" said Sykes sharply. "Slap him from where you stand!"

"We can—if we dare!" choked Josie. "Jac's done a sizzling song—"

"Sing it!" ordered Sykes briskly.

Still, above the voices of the other three rose Murray's angry voice. He was plainly deep in his cups and a man of wrath and thunderbolts.

"Didn't I see the Carradines when nobody else saw 'em?" he demanded of the rear of the room. "Didn't I put 'em where they are today—and a contract never to show without my consent—"

The audience grew restless, looked behind, then back at the Carradines. Certain of Murray's friends had taken him in charge and were leading him, despite his vehement protests, to the far rear. Josie looked once again at Sykes, and then, with her hand on her hip, swung insolently down stage.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said clearly. "We've been dancin' for fifty weeks over on the East Side, with the first chance to show before your sort come to us tonight; and that only because we found the nerve to smash a slavery contract to splinters. If we've pleased you, it's given us the nerve to finish the job by smashin' the splinters. If we haven't—we got the nerve, anyway! The splinter smasher will now be sung, as composed by the littlest Carradine, in a fit of black and red rage, about forty-nine weeks ago, entitled, 'Yes, They Signed the Contract, But They Didn't See Him First.' First per-

formance delayed till tonight so that original could be compared with his description in the third stanza, ladies and gentlemen. Puzzle, find the villain!—G, if you *please!*" to the conductor.

The Metrahattan Club and its ladies listened with a bit of a gasp, and then, involuntarily stirred by the sight of a fine courage in the face of unexpected attack, broke into delicately spontaneous applause that stifled the chord of G that the orchestra gave forth. But instantly the silken audience hushed itself and sat forward as the Carradines, with a fire in their eyes and voices and a color in their cheeks that had not shown before, began to sing.

There were four stanzas and a chorus, and by the time the song was sung, the story of the Carradine-Murray contract was plain to all that audience, one entire stanza, the third, being devoted to a photographic study of Murray's ugly face so exact that for the dullest the puzzle was made plain. And the last chorus, by a change of pronoun from the third to the first person, was chanted with sneering challenge, directly at Murray, still standing at the rear of the little theater.

"Well, we done it, an' th' roof's still stayed on," said Lide in their dressing room, to which haven they had at last retired.

"And if it's fight or run," added Jac with her mouth full of pins, "I feel like fightin'— Come in!"

The door opened and disclosed Sykes with Murray, furious and half drunk, beside him. In the background Sinclair lingered with another man.

"This your friend?" Sykes asked blandly of the team, and the four nodded, mute.

"Of course you've not got your contract with you," he said regretfully.

"Of course we have," asserted Josie.

"Living in snooppy boarding houses learns you." And after a brief turning aside and ensuing wriggle of her supple body, she produced the seal of bondage. Sykes smiled as he read it; then he held it before the fast sobering Murray.

"You can't let this go into court, you

know," he said. "And it might be worth your club membership if it gets out any more than it has. In short, are you ready to sign a waiver of the entire thing, right now?"

Murray growled, but was otherwise ready, and signed. As the papers changed hands, the man beside Sinclair shook off that gentleman's restraining hand and came forward, impressive in his fur-lined overcoat, and speaking quickly.

"Who's this, Sykes?" looking at Murray. "I understood from Sinclair here that I could have the option. I'll headline 'em week after next on Broadway, and book 'em for thirty weeks straight—three hundred per. Is it a go?"

"Is it?" asked Sykes of the Carradines, who simply stared. Sykes laughed.

"Sinclair and I seem to be the promoters, Graves," he said. "I rather guess we'll make it a go. Tomorrow you can all get together, and I'll look over the contract—see it first, if you don't mind!"

It was a great night. After the supper intermission the Carradines all but duplicated their turn, and sang by insistent request, three times over, their "Contract" song. But at last they were back in their dressing room, getting into their shabby coats and hats for departure. Already the new contract was signed, and they held two crisp cheques, one from the club, and one from Graves for dressing their top-liner. No wonder they were silent.

Mag spoke at last, as they all turned and took a last look about the room that had been theirs for three triumphant hours.

"I remember, Jac," she said, "that all of us could 'a' throwed you out the window for settin' till two g. m. one night, writin' that 'Contract' song and pickin' it out on that busted guitar."

"I had to get it outa my system," gurgled Jac. "I felt better ever since. Oh, kids, th' first thing we buy tomorrow's pink silk stockin's with clocks down th' sides, an' a vine up th' front, all silk, an' a yard an' a half long!"

YOU LOVED ME

By HELEN ROSLYN

YOU loved me.
The knowledge went through me like wine;
The passion that filled me was wholly divine,
When you whispered those words, with my head on your breast;
Not even my faith could have brought me such rest.
All sorrow fell from me and vanished in bliss,
When you crushed on my lips that first exquisite kiss.

You loved me.
Not only your voice told me so;
'Twas your soul that spoke to me in passion's first glow.
You crushed me up to you, unheeding your power;
Your kisses fell on me like rain on a flower.
No human achievement, no worship of men,
Can bring me such happiness ever again.

You loved me.
What odds if your fancy roams free?
I know that your life love is no one but me.
It was I who first quickened your soul in your breast.
Tho' others may follow, you gave me your best.
No woman on earth, be she holy or bad,
Can ever take from me what once I have had.
Tho' you wound with your folly, you never can kill
The love you created—it lives in us still.
And when you return and your follies confessed,
I'll forget in your arms that you ever transgressed.



SUE—Don't you know, George kissed me at the door last night twice before
I could stop him!
MAE—Gracious! What cheek!
SUE—Both.



PLATONIC love is a sacred shrine built on the crest of a slumbering volcano.

HIS OWN CYRANO

By MRS. JOHN VAN VORST

DAVID THURSTON sat by an open window in Delmonico's.

It was the lonely October season, when New York, with an atmosphere of unshed tears in the dampness of its warm sea air, seems to deplore the swift passing of the years. No doubt the town was full of amusement places where a man could spend the evening and divert his thoughts. But Thurston was in a thinking mood. He had dined indifferently, and now, as though done for the time being with the material exigencies of life, he drew back from the table, lighted a cigarette and fell to musing. His eyes, distraught, followed a fitful procession, which at times encumbered Fifth Avenue, at times left the street deserted, gray and dreary under the lamplight, struggling for its full glory in the persistent autumn *crépuscule*.

Between the broad, fine brow of his handsome face and the clear cut mouth there was an expression of determination deterred, of resolution tempered. And on his lips there hovered the fatal word, the word of conflict, the little masterful, wedgelike word placed as a stumbling block between success and failure—if!

"If"—the syllable, with a cloud of cigarette smoke, was wafted toward the open window. "If—"

But why formulate? To stare the lesser chance in the eyes was more like to attract than to repel it. Thurston changed the tone of his reflections from the minor to the major, and he began again:

"Since—"

Yet, in the more cheerful tenor of his mood, he could perceive no further basis

upon which to found the airy castles of illusive hope.

Thurston called the waiter, paid his bill and with a grunt to himself of concession that men in love are all equally ridiculous, he walked out of Delmonico's and up Fifth Avenue to his apartments in East Forty-eighth Street.

The girl David Thurston loved was all sorts of a champion. She had won cups for tennis at Newport, for golf at Southampton, and her riding, when she followed the hounds, was spoken of by the old sports as "simply cracking."

Thurston had never been on a horse in his life. There was something slavish in him, in this bondage of the human to activity purely physical. He could fancy the riding of a steed to battle, and the romantic prancings of the mounted knight in tournament appealed to his chivalresque imagination. But the mere pounding across country after a bag of aniseed—this was a too dreary comedown. Indeed, with fevered brain from the first hour he had seen her, Thurston had tried with all the ardor of his young talent to immortalize in verse his *bien-aimée* as a Diana. But it was useless. Sport did not inspire his poetic genius. And fate, to cap the cruel climax, so willed it that his very adoration for Miss Harcourt should remain a prisoner, beating against his heart's unwilling bars, unable to find expression.

As he thought it over on that October night, once installed in his own library, after his lonely dinner at Delmonico's, he felt a sudden shame and humiliation at being a poet. In modern times there could not fail to arise, he recognized sadly, an absurdity from the vague pre-

dicament of poetry writing. Some latent Puritanism, Thurston reflected with a touch of bitterness, had fortunately compelled him to publish all his verse under an assumed name. At least, Miss Harcourt did not suspect him of being a rhymester, nor herself of being his muse. She knew him as a successful New York lawyer, perhaps the only man in her set who had not proposed to her, the only one, perhaps, who really loved her ardently.

Miss Harcourt's memory, where Thurston was concerned, in any event, was evidently short. Oh, the dismal misery of it! She had forgotten even that he was not a sport. His prejudice against athletics had slipped her mind entirely. He held the proof of it there in his hands, written out by her on a sheet of note paper, which he kissed before rereading. She begged him, in friendly, cordial terms, to join them in the Genesee Valley for a "ripping run" the Wednesday following.

Like a man, Thurston joined the "ripping run" on the following Wednesday and made a fool of himself. Tossed hither and thither with improvised science, on a mount intended for the knowing, he ended in a heap on the nether side of a stone fence, and having pulled together his remaining forces, he crawled back, despairing, to the Harcourt mansion.

There, to his astonishment, as he entered the hall, he perceived Miss Harcourt.

She was in a soft, clinging gown of *voile*, feminine, adorable. Her hair waved in turbulent masses about the tiny ears and level brows, which lent to her resolute expression peace and infinite refinement.

"Oh, did you—" She repressed a laugh.

"Not altogether," Thurston answered. "The first fence was enough for me."

She smiled a sweet, radiant smile, which added something fresh and flowerlike to the beauty of her visage, and with perfect tact, she said:

"All good riders get thrown sooner or later."

"You weren't out this morning?" Thurston put the question tentatively.

"No," she answered gravely; "there was some reading I wanted to do."

Thurston, dilapidated, muddy, swung into a chair when she spoke of reading and with a sickening sense of his own banality, he asked:

"Do you care for books, too?"

She laughed:

"Oh, how cruel of you to add that little 'too'! You thought sport was my only hobby?"

"Well, if you had to give up one or the other, outdoors or indoors, which would it be?"

He leaned toward her, enchanted by any pretext to gaze at the sweet curves of her chin and throat. Miss Harcourt reflected a time.

"Your question is unfair," she said at last. "No one would ever be placed in such a position."

"But it's the impossible positions that bring out character."

"Well, then," she said slowly, "I suppose I would give up indoors." Thurston dropped lower in his chair. "Except," she ventured, "except—"

A sudden clamor in the hall announced the return of Thurston's rivals in the field, those who had been more successful than he. With a bitterness increasing, he ran the gantlet. "So sorry, old man!" "No bones broken?" "It's a nasty spot, I grant you, but you had a bully mount." Even the feminine tinkling note chimed in with the compassionate chorus: "You did have a beastly fall!"

Thurston groaned inwardly at this open confronting with his sporting weaknesses. And, alas, the especial wretchedness of it all was that *she* had elected for just this sort of thing. Her choice, demure, deliberate, had passed sweetly over other possibilities, and renounced forever, without so much as a sigh, the "indoors," which made the very hearthstone of Thurston's whole existence. Still, there had been the shadow of a hesitation, drifting like the cloud which emphasizes the rainbow, when she had said: "I suppose I would give up indoors, *except—*"

Thurston hunted again the following day and was again thrown.

In a humiliated and aching heap he took the train that afternoon back to New York. The situation was unbearable. No one could see him without mirthful smiles. He had made himself ridiculous—"like all men in love," he said to himself.

But, mingled with the dirge of confusion at having appeared in Miss Harcourt's eyes as the most incompetent at sports, there was a tiny echo of hope sounding out. One whole morning she had stayed in, desisted from hunting, her beloved pastime, because there was "some reading" she "wanted to do." Lucky author of that printed page who had held her attention undistracted from the field for the space of a few hours! Thurston sighed at the Herculean task, and with every bone a pain, he concluded that Miss Harcourt had probably been studying some scientific tract on horse breeding that exceptional day.

On the morning following his arrival in New York Thurston was up betimes. With the grim, spasmodic energy of those who intend to revolutionize their entire lives, he thrashed about violently, bathed in cold water, refused breakfast, reversed one by one the gentle habits of his poetic existence, convinced that such concession to his chosen idols would thrust him rapidly within the magic circle of the sport.

At Durland's, whither he made his matinal way, he purchased a heap of pink printed paper, and as he stood on the threshold of this riding academy, gazing somewhat astonished upon the activity at Sixty-sixth Street so early in the morning, he patted gently the collapsing string of rose-colored tickets which Durland had sold him with the assurance that in less than twenty lessons he would know how to ride.

Then Thurston went back to his apartments, and after a brief struggle, he yielded to the haunting muse. His momentary infidelity served only as a whet to his famished liking. With an inspiration which lifted him, as the west wind whirls heavenward the autumn

leaf, Thurston wrote these lines to Helen Harcourt:

Dare I to hope
That thou wilt enter more?
There is no fair, high place for thee to dwell.
Too loud the echoes that have crossed the score,
Too deep the tarnished, Love; how could one tell
My heart was once an altar by thy spell?

No more of hope than that the lonely sea-shell,
Crooning its sea chant far from sounding shore,
May roll again upon the broad sea floor;
Yet, even as I hark, the surges swell.
Dare I to hope?

Three months later the verses were published in *Blankley's Magazine*. Through the printed characters, which appeared to Thurston cold, glacial, something of the author's reverent adoration sang in the eternal rhythmic celebration of a man's love for a woman.

In February Miss Harcourt came to New York. She let Thurston know by a short note, which related that she was at the St. Regis and would sail the following day for England. He had not seen her since his hunting escapade, but during all that time a slow storm had been gathering within him, a storm of anger and resentment, anger that his own irrevocable choice should condemn him to a role absurd in the eyes of the sport, and resentment that his talent, recognized by the few to whom he had confided his secret, should keep him as an intellectual pariah from the object of his fond desire.

Thurston called at once on Miss Harcourt at the St. Regis and found her in and alone, almost—the thought traversed his eager mind—almost as though she had been waiting for him.

"I am so glad you came!" Her beautiful eyes were radiant as she spoke.

"Are you really going to sail tomorrow?" Thurston put the question eagerly.

"Yes." She nodded slowly, as though the weight of her hair made it a slight

effort to move her small, aristocratic head.

"And when do you think you will return?" Thurston pursued, ardent, miserable.

One slender arm was extended, and with her delicate, frail fingers Miss Harcourt turned mechanically the leaves of a magazine which lay on a table by her side. Raising her graceful shoulders in a little meditative shrug, she said:

"I don't know. My aunt is going with me. We have no definite plans for coming home."

"But hunting—" Thurston leaned toward the charming face that was bent in reflection.

"Hunting?" Miss Harcourt echoed. A smile parted her scarlet lips, as she glanced at her companion. Thurston was silent, tense. With a little laugh, that made her adorable, Miss Harcourt said:

"This is not the season, you know. But that does not make any difference," she added, becoming suddenly serious. "You are perfectly right in judging me. I am hunting. Even though the season is over, I am still at it."

"Ah!" There was a melancholy ring in Thurston's exclamation. In season, out of season, his chance was equally null. A wild longing to know the truth swept over him. He hated himself for his reticence, and with a swift abandon of all convention, he found the strength he had lacked.

"Miss Harcourt," he said abruptly, "are you engaged?"

He had wanted to ask her if she were in love, but the trial question, trembling, tempestuous, an instant on his lips, had formed itself into the more conventional interrogation. A slight start on Miss Harcourt's part gave Thurston reassurance.

"Oh, no," she said, "I am not engaged."

"Then there's no reason"—Thurston's voice was very low—"no reason, except my own dull timidity, why I should not tell you—tell you that I love you." He looked at her, as though in that gaze he wished to offer the whole treasure of his lasting adoration. "I

love you," he repeated, "with all the fatality that is our irresistible master. I dreamed of you, just you, before I ever saw you." His eyes clung enchanted on the living figure before him. Miss Harcourt did not seem resentful. She sat listening, and Thurston went on, growing reckless, as he breathed the very incense of the fire divine.

"Before I ever saw you I was seeking you."

"How strange!" she murmured.

"Before I saw you I knew that you existed. You were the burden of that inward song which from our birth chants for us the inevitable, just as the sea shell, cast inland a thousand years ago, croons of the sea."

Miss Harcourt had lifted her arm from the table. With her fingers pressed against the magazine's cover, she let fall her hand in her lap. Thurston was going to speak, but something new, vibrant, in Miss Harcourt's attitude seemed to claim his attentive silence. She looked at the magazine on her knees and then at the man before her.

"I see you've been reading those poems, too," she said. "How very beautiful they are!"

A resentful impulse tempted Thurston to protest. Pleading greater favor for himself, the lover present, he was about to denounce the poor absent poet, whose work Miss Harcourt found so admirable. But she continued:

"It is a very strange coincidence that you should have quoted that poem to me today. It was the real reason why I sent for you to come and see me before I sailed. I thought you would understand."

There was something like a sob of sympathy in Thurston's throat, as he said tenderly:

"I do understand. Tell me everything."

"Well, you see"—Miss Harcourt gave a shy laugh—"ever since I read the first line of this man I have followed everything he writes. I think I know them all by heart," she murmured. Then, with a flash of happiness at this memory in common, she cried: "Do you remem-

ber the day up at the Valley when I didn't go hunting? There was one of his poems in the October *Blankley's*, and I wanted to be alone with those wonderful thoughts, just to dream. I suppose you think me silly?" Thurston did not try to answer. His empty heart was filling to suffocation, and she went on: "But you'll think me even sillier, I am afraid, when I tell you that I am going abroad in hope of meeting this man."

"He is not abroad," Thurston blurted out.

Miss Harcourt leaned forward.

"Do you know where he is?"

This provocation to reveal his rival plunged Thurston into silence again. He must win her for himself. To tell her would be treason.

"No," he said hastily. "Don't ask me anything about this poet of yours. I simply take it for granted that Europeans don't write much for the American magazines."

"They told me at the publishers of the magazine office—"

"You have been to the publishers to inquire about him?" There was awe in his tone, which Miss Harcourt mistook for reproach.

"Perhaps no man could understand. I went there and asked for his address because I wanted to tell him how much his work means to me. I should like to know him, to talk with him. They told me that he was in England, they thought, though they couldn't say just where."

A sickening recollection swept over Thurston of his own implicit orders given, that the strictest secret be kept regarding his *nom de plume*, and nothing divulged about his whereabouts. Thus they had relegated him *outré-mer* and ruthlessly.

"You probably think it a wild goose chase?" Miss Harcourt's perfect profile was outlined against the window, as she turned away from Thurston. "I wish you would help me," she murmured. "I sail tomorrow. Will you look out for him at this end—I mean, see if there is anything more published or if you can find out who he is?"

As she brought her eyes back from the window's blank square of sky, she was startled at Thurston's appearance. He had grown deadly pale. A realizing sense of her own egoism swept over her.

"I've been dreadfully cruel," she cried. "Forgive me. Pity me a little, too. I don't quite know what I'm doing. Thank you for being so patient with me. You see I really care for this man. That ought to make me all the more considerate, but when you're in love, every bit of feeling is concentrated on one person. And I love only a dream, a shadow, a man I shall perhaps never see."

"That's better than having to give up a living dream."

"Don't quite give me up." Miss Harcourt spoke the words slowly. They brought the first little glimmer of hope. But still, Thurston would not take another's laurels, and those a poet's, would not, above all, snatch them from the fair hands that extended them blindly toward the invisible choice.

"I sha'n't give you up," he smiled. "Not until you have found your rhymester."

On leaving Miss Harcourt, Thurston took his way down Fifth Avenue in a somewhat exalted state of mind. Then all at once the ridiculousness of the situation seized him. He was sacrificing himself brutally; worse than that, he was sacrificing her happiness, and to what? To his vanity.

But could he really bring her happiness? Was he not, since she had never found him out, possessed perhaps of a double personality, divided into two distinct and warring realms, the lovable and the unlovable? Why had he ever reviled the poor poet in him? That sacrifice was for her. He had transformed his ambitions, or endeavored to, in the hope of pleasing her. He was learning now too late that the only way to win a woman is to be, first of all, true to oneself. As a sport he had failed miserably, and the poet bade fair to share the same fate. But he would have his chance, cost what it might. And with this violent determination, he swung into the Manhattan, sought a

telephone booth and called up the Cunard Line. They booked Thurston to sail the following day on Miss Harcourt's boat for Liverpool.

For four days they had raced across the Atlantic, and now they were nearing Queenstown.

Thurston stood by Helen Harcourt's side up in the prow of the *Lusitania*. The idea of again touching land he faced reluctantly, fearing by this contact with the outer world to lose his beloved. On this marvelous voyage he had discovered a number of things, and the first was that a man in love does well not to talk prematurely of his love. There is, he found, something in the feminine nature exquisitely sensitive, which, like certain flowers, ventures only to unfold when under shelter from the sun's rays. So Thurston had gone slowly. Patiently he had gained ground, bound to outdo his rival, keeping close the secret which trembled ever on his lips, never alluding to his love, but being himself, simply, naturally, his own poetic dreamy, original and passionate self. The result had taken no definite form, though, as an encouraging preliminary, Miss Harcourt had spent all her time with him on the ship. They had walked and talked, lunched and dined together. They had played shuffleboard and checkers and even tit-tat-toe, which Thurston decided was a delightful game, since it brought his head close to hers in studying out the stupid little plan, so close that he could breathe the fresh perfume lurking in the shadows of her heavy, waving hair. Her laugh, too, was charming, as she poised the pencil, pressing it down with her finger tips to make the final cross of victory.

It seemed to Thurston that he could lean forward and catch on those brilliant, smiling lips all the joy the world contained.

She, reassured by his taciturn devotion, had become confident. Indeed, provoked a trifle, like all women, by his silence on sentimental matters after the first declaration, she grew more bold herself, with a touch of coquetry in her

manner which pleased Thurston to distraction.

So the days went on and the ship with them, and, flashing there in the rainbow which played by the vessel's side, in the contact of sun and wave, Thurston thought he detected a promise of hope.

It was Miss Harcourt who first formulated their mutual regret.

"Do you know," she said, lifting her eyes from the dazzling foam that flew upward as the boat cut its puissant way through the blue sea, "I am almost sorry that this is our last day out. I never had such a quick voyage."

"We are on the fastest steamer afloat," Thurston answered, and the commonplaceness of his response was met with a defiant little glance from his companion.

"The boat's speed is not the only thing," she said. "Time doesn't go by the clock, nor by ships and trains."

"What does it go by?" Thurston looked at her tenderly, as she gazed away toward the horizon, trying to put into a vague, impersonal generalization the regret he believed she shared with him at parting.

"Oh, I don't exactly know what it does go by," she said; "only, no two people would measure the same length for an hour or a day."

"Perhaps they would," Thurston said.

"My aunt has found this journey interminable, the longest she has ever made." Miss Harcourt said this with an expression of absolute astonishment. "When we started I thought I never could get to England fast enough."

"To find that man who writes jingles?"

"I suppose so. But, somehow, it seems now such an enormous undertaking to go after a man who hasn't even heard of me. If it had only been someone I knew!" She sighed a discouraged sigh. "But the men I know are all so silly. They couldn't possibly write a poem to save their lives. The only thing they can do is to ride a horse, all of them."

"Except me," Thurston said.

She laughed.

"What a horrid time you had of it up at the Valley! You'll come again, won't you, out of season, when we are alone?"

"I ought to have told you," Thurston said, with a sudden wild beating of the heart, as though he were speeding up the last stretch toward his fairy castle showing in the dim distance its towers against the blue sky of heaven, "I should have told you that after my experience in the Valley I determined to become a horseman."

A rippling laugh greeted this confession. Heavens, what a joy it was to have her there by his side, happy! If he could only keep her there and have the right to make her happy through life! There was a tightening in his throat at the thought of it, but his tone was solemn as he went on:

"Yes, I made up my mind that I would learn to ride or die. That was homage to you of a certain sort. *On fait ce qu'on peut.*"

A flush of pleasure crept over her face, like some sacred signal which the heart's loyalty is bound to show. Thurston watched and cherished this fitful rose light; then he continued:

"I even went so far, if you, in your sporting imagination, can fancy such a thing, as to take some riding lessons at Durland's."

"I don't believe it!" She was sincerely incredulous.

"Here's the proof." Thurston thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a wad of papers. Among them was the string of pink tickets only slightly shortened. "You see, I didn't hit it off with the Durland combination well enough to get up real enthusiasm; but this"—he flung forth the collapsing papers for her inspection—"this is all that remains of the classic series of twenty."

She had caught one end of the Durland tickets in her gloved fingers. Her eyes, however, were resting fixedly upon the papers that Thurston held in his hand.

"Excuse me," she said, "it's frightfully rude and indiscreet, I know—"

Thurston snatched the papers from

her sight and hurried them back into his pocket.

It was the manuscript of his poem "Dare I to Hope?" which she had seen!

She looked at him a long time, as though she were weaving together the loose strands of a scattered mesh.

"It was in your handwriting," she said very deliberately.

"I didn't mean you to know," Thurston answered.

"You wrote that beautiful poem?"

"Yes," he said. "I wrote that and all those others you liked. I wrote them for you. But I didn't want you to like just the poems. I was always hoping you might care the least bit for me." This hope, as he formulated it, seemed monstrously pretentious. "I was jealous, to tell you the truth."

Miss Harcourt said quickly:

"What should you be jealous of, with such a wonderful talent as that?"

"Why, jealous because you admired the 'talent,' as you call it, and didn't seem to care what I felt for you."

"Don't say that!"

"You've forgotten my visit to you at the St. Regis. I told you then that I loved you, and you didn't even answer me. You talked about your poet."

"How scornful you are!" She looked at him timidly. "Can't you realize that, without suspecting you had written the verses, I sort of knew it all the time?"

Thurston wondered if this could be true. Then, very brusquely, he asked:

"Do you think you could ever love me—I mean just me, for myself?"

She did not answer. But he insisted.

"Tell me, could you?" He had taken off his hat, and the damp wind blew across his forehead, as he bent toward her. "I long for you," he said. "I should like to make an enchanted circle, the whole horizon of your desire, with my arms outstretched to enfold you. Beloved, you have been my dream for so long. Be my reality now."

Miss Harcourt lifted her eyes to Thurston's.

"You found me out," he said tenderly. "No one else ever cared for a thing I wrote."

"Oh!" she cried, and with a little impulsive gesture she laid her hand against his shoulder. Thurston let it lie there, his whole being vibrating in welcome to this unconscious caress. "How could people help liking your verses?"

"How could people help worshipping you?" He drew her other arm to him. "Helen," he said, "I love you. As much

as a man can love a woman, I love you."

She murmured something close to him, and as their lips met in that first embrace where two souls are enchanted, the dazzling foam flew upward from the ship's side, flashing its happy rainbow, sighing gently, as though to hush in awe the whole world before love's perfect mystery.



THE SONG OF THE WANDERER

By HENRY STUART DUDLEY

I SING the song of the open sky,
Of the shimmering, deep-voiced sea;
Of the tropic lands, where the palm frond stands,
Of the dripping Florida key.

I sing of the Northern ice plain;
Of the yelping, dashing pack
As they leap away in the year-long day
At the whip that the sledgemen crack.

I sing the song of the desert,
Where the drifting sand whirls high;
In the bones of the bold is my story told
As they lie 'neath the brazen sky.

I have sat by the pampas campfire;
I have been to the ends of the earth;
From the Niger's fall to the Taj Mahal
Have I wandered o'er its girth.

So I sing to the sturdy "drifter"
And his song of the open sky;
Drink a health with me to the tumbling sea,
And the lands where he goes to die!



MRS. NUWED, Sr. (to son, after a family jar)—Don't forget, son, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

MR. NUWED, Jr.—Well, I know a soft question of mine brought a lot of it on me.

THE DEBT

By NINA LARREY DURYEA

"**T**HEN, what is sin?" asked the Marchioness, glancing around the little group idling on the terrace. There was a pause in the animated talk at this direct challenge.

"Sin is bad form," said the British attaché.

"Sin is sweet," said Count de Chauchard.

"Sin is entirely a matter of climate and food," said the Boy. Then, turning his fresh young face toward his host, he asked: "What is your idea, Mr. Dinsmore? In America the one unforgivable thing is weakness, is it not?"

All eyes turned toward the silent figure near the tea table. Dinsmore's sleek, gray head, with its massive, impassive profile, did not move. There was a moment's silence as his long fingers played with a roseleaf fallen on the lace-embossed cloth. He did not answer, but turned his cool, gray eyes toward his beautiful wife, whose pure profile shone like a flower against the ivied wall behind her. Deliberately his gaze traveled over her slender, white-robed figure, as though noting every grace and distinction. "Katherine, dear, answer for me," he said. "What constitutes sin in your eyes?"

A wave of faint color spread from the pearls at her throat across the clear pallor of her face. "Oh, my idea—" she began, smiling.

But Chauchard interrupted. "Do you ask the lily regarding mire? Knowledge, you know, comes only from experience."

Dinsmore's hand lightly tossed the crushed roseleaf into his tea cup, and he met the Frenchman's bright glance with deliberation. "You are quite

right. Virtue is but lack of opportunity, and sin is 'being found out.' But, Katherine, you haven't yet answered the question. Come, you are too intelligent not to have ideas on the subject. Of course, sin has only been a mirage on the horizon of your white soul, but feminine curiosity must have made you raise your eyes to the fleeting vision."

His wife's lips parted gently in a scarcely disguised yawn. The subject plainly bored her. "It is such an ugly word; why bring it here, where everything is charm and peace? Ignore, forget it in this Eden, where there is no serpent." Smilingly she rose, moving forward into the vivid sunlight, which touched her hair to radiance. Chauchard rose, too. "Yes," he said, "why dampen our pleasure by such sordid thoughts? We should allow such things to fall like rain on the umbrella of our indifference."

They all laughed at the simile, as a footman crossed the terrace to their host. "Monsieur, the machine is ready in the west field."

Dinsmore rose. "My friends, we must be off, if Chauchard really wants to try a flight alone. The conditions are perfect. I'll go on ahead to see that all is as it should be." He turned courteously to Chauchard. "I want your first flight alone to be even more than you anticipate. Come on with the others through the forest, and I'll have things ready by the time you get there."

His tall, thin figure, with its stooping shoulders, disappeared through the arch which led to the court of the chateau, while the others, pairing off, strolled down to the velvet lawn.

Chauchard moved toward his hostess, but she called to the Boy, and he perforce fell behind with the little Marchioness, whose rotund proportions were in agreeable contrast to his own slender elegance.

It was truly a scene of mellow charm and loveliness. Shafts of misty sunlight lay across gay parterres of flowers. Peacocks preened and strutted along the terraces, whose stone balustrades and moss-covered statues were smothered in roses and heliotrope. Behind, the Louis XIV chateau reared its stately walls in severe beauty to the tranquil sky, where swallows darted and twittered in mazy flight. In the distance long avenues stretched away in diverging symmetry, dimly alluring beneath their arches of giant trees. Through these glades Chauchard's knightly forefathers had ridden forth to fight for the cross emblazoned on their breasts—insignia of courage, humility and self-abnegation. The gilded chariot wheels of kings and great ministers of Church and State had rolled up to the wide portals, and astute minds had plotted and counter-plotted beneath the turreted roofs. Truly, a dignified and beautiful home, where Peace brooded on folded wings, and Memory could dwell with pride on the glory of tradition.

Chauchard felt a resentment stir within him as they strolled across the sod, that these glories had passed from him to aliens. It was true that this American Croesus had paid a goodly price, thereby putting to flight the vampires of debt which had persistently flapped odious wings above the acres of leaking roofs. His brilliant diplomatic career had been sadly hampered by sordid worries regarding ways and means—a *dot* for his young daughter and the many expensive exigencies of his position; but he could now thank the gods that be for escape from these annoyances. History saw to it that the greatness of his name endured, and architectural splendors minus a bank account were a bore.

His wife, who shared little his outward life, being a confirmed invalid,

appeared entirely contented with the simpler place a few kilometers away, leading a retired life in the undisturbed enjoyment of her good works and her little daughter. And, after all, these Dinsmores had proved charming neighbors, bringing a gaiety and a friendliness which filled many otherwise tedious hours.

He had seen but little of John Dinsmore, as the latter had, in true American fashion, left his wife to her own pleasant devices while he returned to New York to polish that key of gold which unlocks all doors save those of Heaven. This absence of the otherwise devoted husband had enabled him to enjoy an intimacy which, under different conditions, might have been impossible. Half an hour's run in his newly acquired motor, and the tiresome exactions of domesticity were left behind, to be replaced by long hours amid the refurbished splendors of his former home, where well trained servants and a famous *chef* ministered to his material needs, and a charming hostess lent the added charm of a gracious cordiality.

But let it be confessed that this new type of woman had proved the real allure. To have found chastity actually embodied was indeed a novel and piquant experience. He had never ceased to wonder how Katherine, that exquisite creature of subtleties and distinction, had mated with a man of iron. To the pleasure loving Parisian this silent, self-made man of fortune was merely an inconvenience, an unsympathetic product of a crude civilization.

And yet this husband and wife had seemed happy enough in a humdrum fashion, contented with a passionless existence and the domestic devotion to one another which attends virtue. She had been like a butterfly wrapped in a cocoon, ignorant of the radiant possibilities without.

Ah, it had been a rare pleasure to lead her to a fuller knowledge of her woman's heritage, to wake a deeper light in her long, turquoise eyes, where a childish innocence still lingered!

At first she had tried with all her

gentle arts wordlessly to plead for friendship, with a pathetic faith in its possibility, trying to ignore the forces stirring to life within her and the domination of his own passion. He often smiled at the memory of a certain ridiculous "Essay on Friendship" which she had read aloud to him, written by a queer American named Emerson, whose predilection for tame emotions would have been boresome, had they not been so supremely funny and insincere.

He had laughed it to scorn, and contended that for a woman to offer a man friendship was to insult his manhood. "*Moi, je suis homme!*" he had exclaimed dramatically, a self-evident fact which she had been unable to refute. It had been an interesting experience to wake this sleeping princess. Lack of sympathy and companionship had proved his allies. But the conquest had not been easy.

The moral battle waged between her puritanical conscience and her awakened capacities had but lent piquancy to the chase. He was so wise in experience, she so ignorant. It had proved an exquisite pleasure to play on the quivering strings of her passionate heart. Even now, after weeks of secret happiness, there were wild rebellions to curb, moments when she tired of duplicity, and old prejudices awoke to twist her heart with anguish, when her husband's love and faith tormented her like lurking specters.

But he had used his power with tact, and with keen intelligence utilized that timeworn sophistry that "all which is natural is right," that code which has rendered marital fidelity a minus quantity in that society where *chic* is the only honor. It had been an experience fraught with fragrance and charm, where beauty and purity had left their mark even on the toughened cuticle of his worn emotions.

II

THEY had reached the field where Dinsmore awaited them. The small, compact aeroplane, built on the San-

tos Dumont model, stood on its three tiny, rubber-tired wheels, looking too frail a thing to overcome the laws of gravitation. This new sport was replete with fascination, and was the one bond between Dinsmore and the Frenchman. It was to the former that Chauchard owed his initiation to the sport, and many hours of patient teaching, with his innate love of conquest and power, had made him a proficient pupil. Man's intelligence had conquered a new kingdom. Eternity and space had until now been equally inaccessible realms, where man's imagination had only been allowed to wander on wings of speculation. But at last the key had been found which opened this fairyland. Space was now his. Would man be able also to open the door to that other untrodden realm, the Beyond—to glimpse other than human conditions?

Dinsmore stood by "Bébé," as he called his new toy, calm and silent. With careful scrutiny his eyes studied every cog and line, while the others stood chattering their curiosity and admiration.

The Marchioness eyed it sceptically. "Gracious!" she exclaimed. "I'd as soon mount to Heaven on a hoopskirt as on that absurd thing of canvas and wood."

The Boy laughed. "But what a stylish way to die! So much more up to date than in a bed from an elusive microbe."

Katherine, too, gazed apprehensively at the intricacies of the wonderful machine. "Do be careful! If you tumble out of a motor, you tumble somewhere; but out of that thing, you'd tumble into nowhere."

Chauchard moved toward the machine to familiarize himself once more, but Dinsmore's quiet voice was at his elbow. "I've tuned it to perfection for what you need," he said. "But the sun is going down; the sooner you start the better."

Chauchard climbed into the narrow leather strap which formed the seat, and pulled the lever. The engine whirled into motion as Dinsmore thrust

a note into the outer pocket of Chauchard's coat. "Just a line to tell you the way to go in case you lose your bearings," he called, as the aeroplane sprang from the ground. Chauchard caught a glimpse of Katherine's grave eyes raised to his, and then an odd impression seized him. On Dinsmore's face the setting sun seemed to cast a grotesque shadow, distorting it for a brief moment into a semblance of concentrated fury and triumphant hate. But he was off and away. Only the echo of their gay good-byes and a last shout of "Good luck!" reached him. Already he was alone high in the ether, with the sun a scarlet ball dropping down over the edge of the world and the profound serenity of the august vault above him.

Ah, this was power—this dizzy speeding through a pellucid sea of crimson light, this terrific rush, pulsating, buoyant, between the familiar earth below and millions of unseen worlds above! The machine quivered like a live thing; the regular throb of the engine was music, though a puny sound in the immense silence which he felt surrounded him.

Already the landmarks below were indistinct and unfamiliar. The faint, brown lines coiling between the trees were roads—but it was time to look at the directions which Dinsmore had so thoughtfully provided. He was now some two hundred feet above the swinging world below. With his left hand he fumbled in his pocket for the paper, and awkwardly held it fluttering in the wind against his knee. There was no envelope and but a few lines, evidently written hastily in very pale ink. Chauchard was surprised to see the writing growing fainter, even as he read.

Your destination is—Hell! I have known it since I discovered that the man who ate my bread and took my hand had stolen my wife and my honor. Where I come from we don't fight—we kill. You are nearer to Heaven now than you will ever be again. The machine is fixed to mount, but not to descend. You will live till the petrol gives out, and then may the powers of evil receive your soul!

With a gasping cry Chauchard stared at the fading words. Was he mad? Was this true, this message of hate and vengeance? Ah! That was the meaning of the look on Dinsmore's face.

Death! Shrieking a curse, he tugged at the lever to descend, but it failed to obey. The ship "lighter than air" sped on through the fading light, swiftly, smoothly, inexorable as fate, toward the bloody rim of sun vanishing into the night among gory tatters of clouds.

Death! It was here around him, intangible but certain, reaching out invisible but all-powerful fingers to drag him down to— He turned shuddering eyes to the depths below.

The birdlike motion, the swing and dip, as the aeroplane met the currents of air, all the exhilarating delights were still there, but he was no longer in control. He realized at once, fully and completely, that he was as a mote whirling through space in the power of other forces than his own, a thing to mock at—futile, puny and ignominious.

Like hunted things, his thoughts flew here and there, seeking a means of escape. It was, of course, impossible to rectify the machinery where he was. Yet at any moment the terrifying abyss might claim him. How much petrol remained? He peered at the needle, pulsating against the dial. Yes, the tank was nearly full. His executioner had been careful to see that his agony should be prolonged. He was to see death approach with measured tread.

A dying man thinks fast. As he sat there, a shadowy thing speeding through shadows, rage usurped fear. Rebellion hot and fierce shook him. To die thus, like a dog thrown into a trench, powerless to avert one iota of the coming agony—in payment for a few weeks of idle passion! Like an instantaneous vision, his past forty years passed before him as though written on the heavens, that past where Self had always held the center of the stage, where ambition had mocked at scruples and lips prated of "*l'honneur*," while acts disowned it—his brilliant life, full of successful occupation and graceful

pleasures, one glittering kaleidoscope of personal aggrandizement.

Life—dear life! He to leave it at the bidding of an oaf, who, it appeared, had loved his wife as primal men had loved their women! He, a De Chau-chard, to be hurled to his death at the bidding of such a one! Rage filled his soul. He shook his clenched fist at the world below and tugged at the lever, shrieking aloud in impotent defiance. But his voice was scattered by the rushing wind, as, lost in wide space, the machine sped on its trackless way.

Again his eye sought the dial. The trembling needle was halfway to the "O." Lights were twinkling far below from peaceful homes scattered among the trees, matching their radiance against that of the stars in the fathomless vault above. To the south, the lights of Paris flared against the sky, where teeming thousands of his fellow beings swarmed like ants, each bearing its load of human pain. How immeasurably blessed they seemed to the doomed man, sweeping on to death in the darkness!

His sin seemed a small offense as compared with its punishment. And Katherine, would she share in his payment of the debt they both owed her husband for his stolen happiness? Would she know that her husband was the murderer of the man she had loved more dearly than honor? Were slow dragging years of horror and remorse to make her pay as he was paying? He knew her capacity for paying. He had probed to its depth her pure soul, and knew that he had muddled its limpidity. How sweet had been her surrender, but it was not worth the price—a woman against his life, his precious life. Oh, how he hated his folly and her for having been its cause! He could have cursed her for her beauty and sweetness with all the strength of his selfish soul.

Darkness was closing in upon him. He could hardly discern the needle, now three-quarters on its way to "O." Again and again he twisted and tugged at the lever, his face dripping with moisture, in spite of the icy air which whipped dim. Death! An awful fear

assailed him, shaking his stiffened body with convulsive tremors, which reached and sucked at the very foundations of his being. Torturing thoughts of what awaited him in the black abyss yawning below shuddered through his brain and left him gasping and shaking on the narrow strap where he sat. Old superstitions and beliefs knocked at his heart. The Beyond—what did it hold for such as he? Was there, after all, a certain retribution? Did that door, so soon now to open on his terrified eyes, hide even greater terrors than did these fleeting moments?

With a wild impulse to escape he drew the lever to ascend, and sped higher. On and on, higher, even higher, it was now a flight from his own thoughts. Also there must be as great a space to drop as possible. He had heard that it was easier to die so. Upward, still upward through majestic spaces, where a rim of moon now hung wraithlike. He could no longer see anything below him save drifting wreaths of mist coiling between him and the world below. The blood rushed to his head and throbbed in his ears. How many minutes, seconds remained? He could no longer see, nor did he care. Rather he would welcome the end as a relief from the profound sense of isolation and desolation which he felt set him apart from all living things. He felt what it would be to be indeed the "lost soul," a being for whom there was place in neither earth nor Heaven.

Ah! His ear caught the lagging throb of the motor. Death was here! Suddenly, as though a voice sang out of the whirling darkness, the words of a hymn sung at school in England came to his ears, a trick of awakened memory. He saw again the chapel with its open windows, where his wandering eyes watched hawks sailing on motionless wings against the tranquil English sky, and again the sweet, boyish voices singing:

They climbed the steep ascent of Heaven
Through peril, toil and pain.
Oh, God, to us may grace be given
To follow—

He could not recall the rest; the memory faded.

Heaven! He was nearer it now than he would ever be again, as Dinsmore had said.

The propeller was revolving slowly and ever more slowly, and he felt the air beat up against his face as the aero-

plane began to sink. Death was here. He no longer beat it off, but welcomed it with outstretched arms, leaving the rudder uncontrolled.

The needle was at "O." There was a cry, the sound of a downward, dizzy rush, and the heavens were empty save for the stars.



CHACUN À SON GOÛT

By ELIZABETH McINTOSH

"OH, Wilderness were Paradise enow!"
So sang old Omar, specifying how
He'd like some food and friendly company.
Had Omar tried it? Well, I wonder now!

I'll tell you, Omar, how the thing would be:
You settle down beneath your shady tree,
Open your Book of Verses and begin—
But oh, the chiggers! Ah, what misery!

Time for your lunch; ants on the Loaf of Bread,
And floating in the Jug of Wine, instead
Of foam and bubbles sparkling in the light,
The grisly corpses of the insect dead.

Your Love begins to sing, and sitting there
Beside her, now, at last, does life seem fair.
Alack! The song breaks off with dismal shriek—
There is a caterpillar in her hair!

At length, with thankful heart, at day's decline,
You hasten home to bathe and dress and dine;
And, seated in the candles' golden gleam,
Swear stoutly, "No more Wilderness for mine!"



SOCIETY is like Jericho—its walls fall down before him who does the most trumpeting.



THE school of experience is an industrial institution that has no vacations.

THE WOMAN'S WEDNESDAY

By HAROLD SUSMAN

SCENE—The drawing-room of Mrs. Ella Mandeville Dare.

The apartment is filled with women. Some are young, and some are old. Some are short, and some are tall. Some are fat, and some are thin. But all are talking.

MRS. DARE—Ladies! (*Nobody pays any attention to her.*) Ladies!! (*Only a few pay any attention to her.*) Ladies!!! (*Everybody pays attention to her.*) This is our first Woman's Wednesday. (*Applause.*) But I hope that it will not be our last. (*More applause.*) I hope that we will meet here Wednesday after Wednesday, week after week, month after month, year after year, to talk—(*Most applause.*) I was about to say that I hope we will meet here to talk—upon subjects in which we, as women, are one and all interested, such as ethics, politics and men—(*Frantic applause.*) I was about to say that we will discuss ethics and politics, and mention will be made of other things also. Please do not applaud! (*Applause.*) Let me present Mrs. Ida Beverley Nagg, who will speak to you on the subject of "The Newest Thought." (*Applause.*)

MRS. NAGG—Ladies! It gives me great pleasure to be able to bring to you the message of the Newest Thought. You have all left the Old Thought for the New Thought. And now it is time for you to leave the New Thought for—the Newest Thought! This is the truth that I preach, the truth that I represent, the truth that I embody. In the Old Thought man was what he thought he was. In the New Thought man is what he thinks he is. And in the Newest Thought

man will be what he thinks he will be. In the Old Thought I, as a woman, thought that I was inferior to man. In the New Thought I, as a woman, thought that I was equal to man. In the Newest Thought I, as a woman, think that I am superior to man. And if I think I am—I am! And if I can think I am, you can think that you are! And if you think you are—you will be! (*Applause.*)

MRS. DARE—And now let me present Mrs. Margaret Ridgeley Gabbington, who will speak to you on the subject of "Woman Suffrage." (*Applause.*)

MRS. GABBINGTON—Ladies! "To vote, or not to vote—that is the question!" That is the question that confronts you and me and every woman in the world today! And those of us who are worthy of the holy name of Woman, decide—to vote! Those of us who are competent to decide! Those of us with a mind capable of conceiving something more than the three M's—Man, Matrimony and Motherhood! (*Applause.*) Man is all right. So is Matrimony. And so is Motherhood. But a mentality limited to this trinity—is all wrong! Is woman fit for nothing but to mate with man and to produce posterity? Let us consider! What is the difference between the masculine and the feminine provinces and privileges? I will tell you. A man can be a husband; a man can be a father, and a man can vote. A woman can be a wife; a woman can be a mother, and a woman cannot vote! That is the difference! That is the only difference! And it is not a difference of God's creating! It is a difference of man's creating! If man put it

up, woman can put it down! Women do not want to be husbands. Women do not want to be fathers. But women do want to be—voters! And if they want to be, they can be! And if they can be, they should be! And if they should be, they must be! (*Applause.*)

MRS. DARE—Ladies! Let me present Mrs. Emily Winchester Grogg, who will speak to you on the subject of—

But Mrs. Dare was not able to continue her remarks. Or, rather, she did not wish to do so. And nobody else wished her to do so. Nobody was interested in Mrs. Grogg or Mrs. Dare or anybody or anything but—Miss Gwendolyn Fortesque, the celebrated and beautiful actress, who at that juncture made her appearance in the drawing-room, wearing a dream of a yellow satin gown, with an overskirt of paler

yellow chiffon and an underskirt of deeper yellow silk. The skirt was edged with a wide band of gold braid, and the collar and cuffs were edged with narrow bands of gold braid. Miss Fortesque also wore a love of a yellow velvet picture hat, with a wide brim turned up on one side and trimmed with three large yellow ostrich feathers and a wide band of gold braid around the crown. In addition to this, Miss Fortesque wore a broad ermine stole, three-quarter length and edged with tails, and she carried a large ermine pillow muff, also edged with tails. At her throat she wore a diamond crescent. On her bosom she wore a diamond sunburst. At her waist she wore a diamond butterfly. Around her neck she wore a diamond chain—etc.—etc.—etc. . . .



A SONG FOR SUMMER

By WILLIAM R. BENÉT

SING, ye grasses! The swift bird passes
 Dipping to daisies and dropping song;
 And Love lies dreaming the morning long.
 Twirleth the yellow butterfly,
 A pollened petal blown far and high—
 Under the wild oats, silvery,
 On bending hillsides, the flickers flee,
 Of vision Elysian past all misprision,
 And Joy like the blue without boundary!

Bright throats swelling and light notes welling,
 String on the pearl notes from June to June,
 Scatter the dumb fields full of tune!
 So may, to westward, the sunset clime
 Quiver before the assault of rhyme,
 And noon awaken and night be shaken
 Forever from infinite summertime—
 From sunning and loving summertime!



"HOME is where the heart is."
 "But some men are too big-hearted."

THE WIFE THAT WAS

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

THE young man registered as John L. Catlin, rather doubtfully, as if not quite sure of the name, and then asked for Mrs. Richard Norvin.

"Mrs. Nettie Norvin?" queried the clerk, who had been clerk in a divorce colony hotel long enough to be both quick and particular about names.

"Ah, yes, of course," returned the young man, with an apologetic laugh. "Very thoughtless of me. She'd naturally drop as much of her husband's name as possible as soon as she could."

The clerk glanced at the clock. "Probably hasn't any husband now," he remarked. "This is her day to lose him, and she's been up at court all the afternoon. It doesn't take long, after a case is reached, when there's no contest."

The young man frowned, as if he found something displeasing in the careless and rather jocular way the clerk referred to the affair. Then he took a note from his pocket and tossed it across the desk. "Please give her that when she comes in," he said.

The clerk looked after him curiously as he left for his room in the wake of a bellboy. He was a young man, certainly under thirty, smooth shaven, erect, and yet with the leisurely, careless air of one who took life easily. He lacked the alertness of a business man, but he certainly had the carriage, dress and manners of a gentleman.

"Her affinity, probably," commented the clerk to himself. "They're getting so they show up mighty quick these days."

A moment later two ladies had his attention—an elderly and rather ample

one, with a lorgnette that she seldom used, and a much younger one, slender, vivacious, pretty and gowned with the quiet perfection that means both money and taste. The clerk slid the note that had been left with him across the desk toward the younger, but she was too much interested in what she was saying to her companion to notice it.

"I've got it, Aunty," she kept repeating; "I've got it, I've got it, I've got it! Do you realize that? I've actually got it at last. I am free!"

Mrs. Cooley, the aunt, listened tolerantly. "Yes, you are free," she acquiesced finally.

"I am free." The younger woman seemed to find something in the words that sobered her. "I am free," she repeated, "and I—I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

"Better not do either now, Nettie," advised Mrs. Cooley. "I'd just put my right name on the register, if I were you, and be satisfied with that for the present."

"Wh—what?" faltered Nettie.

"You are no longer Mrs. Norvin, you know," explained Mrs. Cooley; "you were given the right to resume your maiden name."

The wife-that-was seemed troubled. "But must I?" she asked. "It seems so like severing the last thread."

"Don't you want it severed?" demanded Mrs. Cooley.

"Oh, yes, of course," was the hasty reply. "But—but why be in such a dreadful hurry about it?"

"I do not know," returned the elder woman severely, "just what is and is not obligatory, but I am sure it would be distinctly bad form to pose a minute

longer than necessary as a person you are not. Remember, you have ceased to be Mrs. Norvin."

"Well, I don't think it's very nice of you to keep reminding me of it," pouted Nettie. Mrs. Cooley, remembering her lorgnette in this emergency, raised it and surveyed her niece with haughty disapproval, whereupon the latter hastened to add: "Oh, I suppose you're right, and I'll do it, of course; but I don't see why I can't be Mrs. Norvin, just on the register, until we leave here tomorrow."

She picked up a pen, still unheeding the note the clerk had pushed over to her, and held it poised above the register. Then she put it down again, shaking her head slowly, and turned to the clerk. "Please change me," she said, "to Nettie Reece."

"My dear," interrupted Mrs. Cooley, "the judge has already done that."

"On your books," added the young woman, still addressing the clerk. "I am Nettie Reece now."

"Miss or Mrs.?" asked the imperturbable clerk.

"Why—"

"Miss, of course," put in Mrs. Cooley.

"Oh, Aunt!" expostulated the niece.

Mrs. Cooley turned a coldly reproving glance upon her niece. "Nettie," she said, "don't be silly. I know best."

"Were you ever divorced?" demanded Nettie rebelliously.

"Certainly not," was the indignant reply. "I am still Mrs. Cooley, but you never were Mrs. Reece, and you are not now Mrs. Norvin. The judge relieved you of the latter name, but he could not *restore* the former, because you never had it. He gave you back your maiden name. There isn't any 'Mrs.' in a maiden name, is there?"

"But think how awkward—"

"Nonsense!" Mrs. Cooley was quite impatient. "It's much the best way. People are always curious about absent husbands—wondering whether they're dead, divorced or simply missing. Why advertise the lamentable fact that you have or have had one? It's

far better to eliminate him entirely. Anyhow, you have no choice. You are either Mrs. Richard Norvin, which you have just got a court to decide you are not, or you are Miss Nettie Reece. It is impossible to reach any other conclusion."

The young woman, still rebellious, was considering a reply to this plausible argument, when the clerk deftly directed her attention to the note by sliding it a little nearer. "Oh!" she cried, and hurried away with it, whereupon the clerk arbitrarily settled the vexed question by quietly passing the word that Mrs. Norvin was now Miss Reece.

Mrs. Cooley followed, with such haste as her dignity and physical proportions would permit, to the ladies' parlor, where she found her niece, much excited, perusing a note. "Nettie," she reproved, "you are becoming more capricious and impossible every day. Have you no dignity at all? The idea of rushing away like that!"

"I recognized Dick's handwriting," explained Nettie, looking up. "He's here."

"Dick!" repeated Mrs. Cooley, simulating bewilderment. "Dick! What Dick?"

"Why, there's only one Dick," answered Nettie.

"Am I to understand," said Mrs. Cooley severely, "that you are referring to Mr. Norvin?"

"Of course. Didn't I say 'Dick'?"

"Nettie," cautioned Mrs. Cooley, "never again be guilty of the impropriety of speaking of Mr. Norvin as 'Dick.' 'Richard' would be bad enough, Heaven knows, but 'Dick' is scandalous. Remember, you are divorced."

"Why do you keep telling me that?" complained Nettie petulantly. "Don't you think I know it?"

"If you do," returned Mrs. Cooley, "please have some regard for the proprieties, even if Mr. Norvin has not."

"What has he done?" demanded Nettie.

"Done!" repeated Mrs. Cooley. "He has come here. Nothing could be more indelicate than that."

"Why shouldn't he come—if he wants to see me?"

"It's scandalous," declared Mrs. Cooley, "highly improper, disgraceful!"

"Can't we still be friends?"

"Certainly not. I am not familiar with the etiquette of divorce, but I am sure that only the most formal and distant courtesy is permissible, and even that only when circumstances compel you to meet. I can imagine nothing in more wretched taste than his appearance here at this time."

"Oh, well, no one knows he is here," returned Nettie. "He registered under another name."

"A clandestine meeting!" cried Mrs. Cooley, horrified. "A clandestine meeting with your divorced husband! What could be more reprehensible? You must send him word to leave at once."

"No," said Nettie; "I must see him."

"Impossible!" declared Mrs. Cooley. "The settlement is not yet made," returned Nettie.

The argument was unanswerable. No question of alimony had figured in the suit, as there had been a private understanding with regard to that, and the details were yet to be arranged. If Norvin saw fit to repudiate that agreement, which was merely a verbal one, the situation would be awkward, to say the least.

"I warned you," said the exasperated Mrs. Cooley, "that it was a mistake to leave matters in this unsatisfactory condition. You have nothing but Mr. Norvin's word now."

"That's all I want," retorted Nettie. "Dick's word is always good."

"Mr. Norvin's," corrected Mrs. Cooley.

"Dick's," insisted Nettie.

"I see you are determined to disgrace yourself," sighed Mrs. Cooley.

"Dick is a good fellow," defended Nettie, "and perfectly honorable; but we couldn't agree. We're not suited to each other, that's all. We have different ideas of life. We quarreled. But I like Dick."

"I never heard such a scandalous confession!"

"Dick will provide for me just as generously as he promised," pursued Nettie, "but we have yet to determine in what way—what property will be included in the settlement, you know."

"Oh, well," conceded Mrs. Cooley, "I suppose we must see him."

"Why 'we'?" asked Nettie.

Mrs. Cooley was shocked. "Do you think," she demanded indignantly, "that I will permit you to see him unchaperoned?"

"Oh, Dick's quite harmless," argued Nettie. "I've seen him alone lots of times."

Mrs. Cooley again remembered the lorgnette, and Nettie capitulated.

"We will go to our suite," Mrs. Cooley decided, "and write him a note."

II

A GENTLE rap on the door of Richard Norvin's room awakened him from a reverie that was not altogether pleasant. He was, therefore, rather glad of the interruption.

"Come in!" he called.

The door opened and Nettie slipped in, quickly closing the door behind her. He looked up at her in surprise.

"I suppose this is scandalous, Dick," she said.

"Oh, I don't know," he returned. "Unusual, perhaps, but why scandalous?"

"I'm not your wife now, you know," she explained.

"All settled, is it?"

"Y-yes." She faltered a little over this.

He rose deliberately and placed a chair for her. "In that case," he remarked whimsically, "I suppose I must be a bit more courteous and deferential."

"I don't think I'd better sit down, Dick," she objected.

"It's no more scandalous to sit down than it is to stand up," he argued.

"But I must hurry away. Somebody might come."

"Lock the door," he suggested.

"No, indeed!" she cried. "Think of the impropriety! Aunt Emma would never recover from the shock, if she heard of it."

"Then," he said, "by all means let her hear of it."

"It's bad enough as it is. Aunt Emma wanted me to send for you to come and talk to us both, and I had the hardest kind of a time to get away from her. She's afraid I'll disgrace her."

"Why don't you?" he asked lightly. "Aunt Emma ought to be disgraced. It would do her good."

"I have," she returned, with a nervous glance at the door—"if anybody comes. Think of being found alone here—with you! It's compromising."

"I hadn't thought of that," he reflected. "I suppose it might be made the basis of a breach of promise suit."

"Don't joke about it, Dick," she pouted. "It's really very shocking and—immodest. I ought not to have come."

"Well, sit down, anyway," he urged.

After a moment of hesitation, she obeyed. He stepped over to the door and turned the key.

"Oh, you mustn't!" she objected. "Think how it looks!"

"It's better," he insisted, "than having some chambermaid or bellboy blunder in and rush away to the office with a story that would start the gossips. Besides, there is a little business to discuss, and we don't want to be interrupted. You are not afraid of me, are you, Nettie?"

"Oh, dear, no," she laughed. "I never was afraid of you, even when I was your wife—and you were a lot nicer when I was not."

"Was I, Nettie?" he queried thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes, indeed, except at the very first."

"Well, I can return the compliment, Nettie," he said. "You were also much nicer when you were not my wife. So we ought to be pretty well satisfied now."

"Yes, Dick, we ought to be."

"Does it make you any happier?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so," she answered uncertainly, and then: "Yes, of course it does. And you?"

"Oh, I've been merely a passive participant," he parried.

"Always passive, Dick," she commented; "never active."

"Always passive, Nettie," he conceded. "Why not? Did you want me to fight the divorce?"

"Did you want to?" she countered.

"Well, there *was* some incompatibility of temper," was his evasive reply; "and I rather incline to the peaceful life."

"Peace and your own way," she remarked.

"You had *your* own way in this," he said.

"Merely because it was the easiest way for you," she retorted. "You've never had to struggle for anything, not even a wife."

"She did come rather easy," he reflected, and then, as he noted the flush that followed: "Oh, I didn't mean to be offensive, Nettie."

"You were quite right," she admitted. "It was a marriage of convenience on both sides."

"And," he added, "like most of them, it turned out rather inconvenient. I blame myself very much, Nettie."

"I was quite as much to blame," she maintained.

"No," he said, resuming his seat and the cigar he had been smoking when she entered, "not nearly so much. You had match making relatives to influence you, and you saw the world through their eyes. You could hardly have escaped a marriage of worldly convenience; but it was quite different with me. There was no earthly reason why I should marry at all, unless I found the girl I couldn't live without."

"Then, why did you?" she asked.

"Flattered vanity. I imagine," with a rueful smile. "For a man who didn't want money, Nettie, you were the great prize. It was flattering to think I could have you."

"How silly you are, Dick!" she laughed. "How little you know! We campaigned for you deliberately, shamelessly, and got you."

"And were disappointed," he suggested.

"Ye-es," she admitted reluctantly. "Society was my world, social prestige my ambition, and you cared nothing for it. You did not fall in with my plans as I thought you would. We had nothing in common."

"Nothing in common," he repeated. "I guess that's right, Nettie. I expected to fit you into my life without regard to yours. I can see now how foolish we both were, but, really, I was the more at fault."

She shook her head.

"Yes, I was," he insisted. "I was no more ready for matrimony than I was for the ministry. I wanted you, Nettie; I liked you and was proud of you; but I had no thought of ordering my life differently because of you. You were to be mine, that was all."

"And you and your money," she returned, "were to give me what I sought; you and your money were to pave the path to social eminence—and you wouldn't. You were quite willing your money should, but you wouldn't. There was a total lack of sympathy and understanding, Dick, and we traveled different and diverging paths. I have been thinking it over during the long wait here, and I can see that I was dreadfully stubborn and selfish and unreasonable. A spirit of concession might have done so much."

He shrugged his shoulders. "We ought to have done our thinking a little sooner, Nettie," he laughed, "but, even then, it probably would only have prolonged the agony. Anyhow, it's too late now, so why talk about it? Let's turn to business. I promised that you should have a hundred thousand dollars. Do you want the house included in that?"

"Oh, dear, no," she shuddered. "That's where we quarreled. I should be dreadfully unhappy there."

"What property or securities do you want?" he asked.

"I'm sure I don't know, Dick," she answered. "Why can't you keep it all and just pay me the income on my share? I'll have to have somebody to look after it, you know."

Something in the idea caught his whimsical fancy. "Your ex-husband as your business manager!" he commented. "That certainly would be a novelty. But I am afraid, Nettie, in spite of your confessed worldliness, that you are not very practical. Aunt Emma would hardly approve."

"Aunt Emma has nothing to say about it!" she flared up in sudden rebellion. "Aunt Emma is too domineering! I'll do as I please."

"Anything that annoys Aunt Emma suits me," he decided, after a moment of thought. "But a practical woman, Nettie, would hardly be willing to leave her business affairs in such shape; she'd want to be sure of her property."

"Well," pouted Nettie, "her manager would attend to that, wouldn't he?"

"Oh, all right," he agreed. "I'll have the necessary transfers made and report to you in New York."

She rose to go, and he, putting aside his cigar, was instantly on his feet. They faced each other uncertainly. Time was, for a few months after the wedding, when he would have taken her in his arms. Time was, a little later, when he would still have had this right but would not have availed himself of it. He was rather sorry now, as he realized how beautiful she was, that he could not revert to the earlier practice. It seemed quite absurd that there should be any impropriety in it. On her part, she seemed to divine his thoughts, and blushed. It made her quite angry with herself. The idea of blushing at the mere thought of a caress that had once been accepted as a matter of course!

"I don't know just what the etiquette of parting for divorcees is," he said at last lightly, "but I presume you can shake hands with your business manager without fracturing any of the conventions."

"What a ridiculous situation!" she laughed, extending her hand.

A sharp rap at the door startled her into withdrawing it suddenly, as if caught in some impropriety.

"Who is it?" he called out.

"Mrs. Cooley," was the reply. "I wish a word with you."

"Aunt Emma!" whispered Nettie, clutching him by the arm in her dismay.

"I'll join you in the parlor in ten minutes," he promised.

"I wish to see you now," insisted Mrs. Cooley. "It is important." She tried the door, but found it locked. Then she rapped again. "I shall keep this up," she announced, "as long as may be necessary."

"Hide me, Dick—hide me!" pleaded Nettie, clinging closer. "She mustn't find me here! It—it's shocking!"

Somehow, in guiding her to the closet, which was his first thought, his arm sought her waist, and he was conscious of an unexpected thrill. It seemed odd. It was the same waist that his arm had encircled often, but never with quite this effect. Why should the new conditions and this novel situation make such a difference? But there was time only for momentary wonder then.

He left the closet door ajar that she might have air, and then admitted Mrs. Cooley.

"What have you done with Miss Reece?" demanded Mrs. Cooley beligerently the moment she was in the room.

"Who's Miss Reece?" he asked.

"You know perfectly well," retorted Mrs. Cooley. "She was your wife, but she has resumed her maiden name."

"Oh!" he said. "Has Nettie gone as far as that?"

"She's no longer 'Nettie' to you!" declared Mrs. Cooley. "What have you done with her? She said she was going to the office, but she didn't go, and she's just silly enough to have come here. Where is she?"

Mrs. Cooley did not wait for a reply, but with surprising quickness for one of her proportions, gained the closet door and swung it open.

"Compromised!" she cried, as Nettie

emerged. "Locked in a room with a man! Found in his closet! Oh, the shame of it!"

"He was my husband once," defended Nettie.

"So much the worse!" declared Mrs. Cooley. "It's disgraceful, scandalous! Any honorable man who had so compromised a woman would marry her."

"B-but we're just divorced," objected Nettie.

"Your reputation," returned Mrs. Cooley, "is of more importance than your divorce."

"I assure you, Mrs. Cooley," put in Norvin, "I had no thought of involving Nettie—"

"Miss Reece," corrected Mrs. Cooley.

"Nettie," insisted Norvin. "I had no thought of involving Nettie in any unpleasant consequences, and if I have done so I am willing to make any reparation in my power."

"Why should she throw herself away on you a second time?" demanded Mrs. Cooley.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Norvin.

"You planned it all to get her back," charged Mrs. Cooley.

"He did nothing of the sort!" interrupted Nettie. "It's all my fault, and I won't be forced on him again. Besides, the decree says neither of us can marry for a year."

"I'm glad of that," declared the excited and inconsistent Mrs. Cooley. "He ought to marry you if he could, but it would be a shame if he did. No gentleman would compromise his wife."

"I'm not his wife," asserted Nettie.

"Of course not," agreed Mrs. Cooley. "If you were, it wouldn't be compromising."

"Permit me to suggest, Mrs. Cooley," said Norvin, "that Nettie is compromised in the eyes of no one but yourself, and there is no particular reason why you should say anything about it. I made my offer—"

"Do you think," broke in Nettie, "that I'd marry again, even if I could, before I find out how it feels to be divorced?"

"Poor unsophisticated child!" said

Mrs. Cooley, becoming suddenly sympathetic. "It would be a shame if you had to; but perhaps, if we are careful, we may yet save your good name without that terrible sacrifice. Let us hope that Mr. Norvin will now have the grace to keep away."

"But he's my business manager," objected Nettie.

"Your what?" cried Mrs. Cooley.

"My business manager. He's going to have charge of the property he gives me."

Mrs. Cooley remembered her lorgnette, but her dignity had suffered much during the interview, and even the lorgnette could not restore it.

"Come with me!" she ordered, grabbing Nettie by the arm. "Come away from the influence of this man. You are crazy! He has hypnotized you! Perhaps, if I get you alone, I can drive a little sense into you."

At the door Nettie paused a moment.

"See you in New York, Dick," she called back.

"All right, Nettie," he answered.

Mrs. Cooley was apoplectic in her indignation.

III

NORVIN was in New York, awaiting with more anxiety than he would admit his next interview with Nettie. Many things, including the difficulty of securing an unchaperoned interview, had occurred to stimulate his interest. They had, quite by accident, found themselves on the same train during a part of the journey East, but Mrs. Cooley had been on guard every minute. He had thought to simplify matters by going to the same hotel, but Mrs. Cooley had immediately taken Nettie to another. She was determined that there should be no more than a formal business meeting, at which she should be present, and neither Norvin nor Nettie approved of this. She would be sure to interfere, to criticise, to object; there would be no chance of settling matters harmoniously.

And Mrs. Cooley dominated the situation. Without the slightest au-

thority over either, her aggressive personality kept them in subjection. Norvin might have issued a declaration of personal independence, but it would have availed nothing so long as Nettie remained in bondage, and Nettie was as helpless as a rebellious child. "If I can't see Dick when I want to," she complained, thus scandalizing her aunt, "what was the use of getting a divorce from him?" But her rebellion did not go beyond mere verbal mutiny.

The New York situation, therefore, was awkward, and this followed a journey that had been full of diverting or aggravating incidents. They had found themselves once at the same table in the dining car, but Mrs. Cooley's air had been so aggressively forbidding that he had ventured no more than a remark about the weather. They had also met once or twice in the observation car, but Mrs. Cooley had invariably and immediately taken Nettie back to their own section in the other car.

All this had been rather diverting, for he enjoyed the discomfiture of Mrs. Cooley, but it was distinctly annoying to have a buffet car acquaintance comment freely upon Nettie's personal attractions, and it was even more annoying to have that buffet car acquaintance secure an introduction to her and devote himself to her service during the rest of the trip. The man was unnecessarily enthusiastic, too; he said she was "a peach of a girl" and informed Norvin confidentially that he had got "on the blind side of the old lady." It is all right to have one's wife discreetly praised, but it is decidedly aggravating to be told that one's ex-wife is "a prize package that would make any man a ten-time winner." No one cares to be told what he has lost, and no one likes to feel that he is denied a privilege that another finds so pleasurable. Norvin's buffet car acquaintance became most obnoxious to him. If it had not seemed so preposterous, Norvin might have thought himself jealous.

At any rate, however he might explain this mental irritation, circum-

stances had kept Nettie, in person or imagination, constantly before him, and the New York problem made her still a dominant interest. A note from her had given him quite an unexpected thrill, it seemed so improperly clandestine. "I'll be alone tomorrow at three o'clock," she had written. "Suite 316." It had all the charm of indiscretion, of a hazardous flirtation. Considering their past relations, there was also something delightfully farcical about it.

He was at the door of Suite 316 on the minute, and Nettie, as excited as if it were a boarding school escapade, received him. The circumstances of the interview seemed to bring them a little closer together, and at the same time add to the constraint of their new relations toward each other. They shook hands quite formally, which seemed so absurd that they both laughed.

"Nettie," he said, "I suppose it's none of my business, but that she-dragon is awful."

"Dick," she returned, "she's more intolerant than you were."

"What you need now, Nettie," he declared, "is a divorce from her."

"I wish I could get one, Dick," she sighed. "She arouses a spirit of revolt in me that makes me want to do all sorts of dreadful things."

"Why don't you?" he asked.

"Why don't I what?"

"Do some of the dreadful things. I'll help."

"Dick," she said reproachfully, "do you think it's nice of you to tempt your former wife to indiscretions?"

"I think anything that will shock Aunt Emma is justified," he maintained.

"We've already shocked her," she argued.

"But not as much as we might."

"If she should find you here—"

The sentence was not finished, for Mrs. Cooley, returning unexpectedly just then, found him there, and the effect was all that could be desired. She was shocked, amazed, astounded. She did not thus express herself in

words, but the way she surveyed them through her lorgnette was proof of it.

"Nettie," she said at last, "what does this mean?"

"Why—why, Aunt Emma," replied Nettie, "I am interviewing my business manager."

"Alone?" There was a world of shocked disapproval in the tone.

"I came," explained Norvin, "with a list of the real estate and securities that I purpose transferring to Nettie."

"Miss Reece," corrected Mrs. Cooley.

"Nettie," insisted Norvin. "I wish to see if they are satisfactory."

"You probably wish to bamboozle her into accepting a lot of worthless stuff," retorted Mrs. Cooley.

"Dick wouldn't do that," interrupted Nettie hotly.

"Mr. Norvin," corrected Mrs. Cooley.

"Dick," maintained Nettie.

"Such familiarity with a business manager," reproved Mrs. Cooley, "is most reprehensible." She turned to Norvin. "I will look over the list."

She remained standing, evidently with the idea of making the interview brief, and courtesy compelled him also to stand.

There was little to which she could object in the list that he read, but she objected wherever possible, taking no pains to conceal her suspicion that he was trying to overreach Nettie in some way.

"And then there is the bungalow," he said in conclusion.

"That's where we hid away for our honeymoon," mused Nettie. "And we were so happy there for a brief time."

"You may have it or not, as you wish," said Norvin. "It's not worth much—"

"I should say not!" put in Mrs. Cooley scornfully. "We do not want it."

"Indeed, indeed, we do!" cried Nettie. "I want it. The associations are dear to me, very dear."

"Nettie!" exclaimed Mrs. Cooley.

"They are!" insisted Nettie. "I'd rather have the bungalow than anything else."

"And I'd rather have you rather have it," murmured Norvin.

"Rubbish!" ejaculated Mrs. Cooley.

"If Nettie and I cannot discuss our affairs here without this unpardonable interference," said Norvin defiantly, "we'll go elsewhere."

"You will do nothing of the sort," retorted Mrs. Cooley.

"We'll go for a drive," declared Norvin.

"I have no doubt," returned Mrs. Cooley, "that Nettie would be silly enough to do it—if I'd let her."

"We'll dine together afterwards," persisted Norvin.

"Can't you think of something more scandalous?" asked Mrs. Cooley sarcastically.

"And then go to the theater," added Norvin.

"I never heard of such an outrageous proposition!" declared Mrs. Cooley. "You seem determined to compromise Nettie, but fortunately I am here to protect her from your machinations."

"What's the harm?" pouted Nettie.

"Foolish child!" said Mrs. Cooley.

"Think of your reputation!"

"He never hurt it before," objected Nettie.

"But it's different now," explained Mrs. Cooley. "I can think of nothing in more wretched taste, aside from any question of propriety, than for you to be seen with him."

"Then go away and let us have a little talk here," urged Nettie.

"Shocking!" cried Mrs. Cooley.

"You can do nothing without me."

"We can do nothing *with* you," complained Nettie.

"At any rate," put in Norvin impatiently, "there can be no objection to our going to see the lawyer who is putting this financial arrangement in legal form."

"Certainly not," agreed Mrs. Cooley.

"I'll go with you. Just wait a minute."

She passed into an inner room, leaving them alone in the parlor of the suite.

Norvin turned his eyes from the

door to Nettie, and found her looking at him with such an expression of vexation and dismay that he stepped to her side, put his arms around her and kissed her.

"I can't help it," he said. "She drives me to it."

"She does," sighed Nettie. "Do it again."

He did. "And let's run away," he urged.

"Where?" she asked.

"Supper and the theater," he answered. "We'll give her the slip at the lawyer's."

"If I only dared!" she whispered.

"We'll do it," he declared.

"Be careful," she cautioned. "She's coming."

Mrs. Cooley, returning, found Nettie blushing like a self-conscious school-girl caught in a flirtation. Norvin, also self-conscious, was trying vainly to appear at ease. Mrs. Cooley eyed them keenly but made no comment.

IV

NETTIE'S face glowed with the pleasurable excitement of an escapade that is not too serious and yet is serious enough to cause some apprehension. She had run away for an evening with Dick and was now dining with him. Aunt Emma would be frantic. Aunt Emma had gone with them to the lawyer, had objected to everything possible and had exacted many concessions, but it had been finally decided just what property was to be put in Nettie's name and just what Dick's powers and duties as manager should be, and the lawyer had been instructed to put it all in legal shape as quickly as possible. Then, while Mrs. Cooley was exchanging some last words with the lawyer, Norvin had whisked Nettie away and into an elevator, had rushed her to a waiting cab and—they were free for the evening. It was quite romantic and exciting.

"But I shudder to think what Aunt Emma will say to me when I get back," Nettie reflected.

"Why go back?" asked Norvin.

"Dick!" exclaimed Nettie, aghast.

"Well, I wouldn't let her dominate me!" he declared.

"But you do!" she retorted.

"Solely on your account," he explained.

"It's not so much Aunt Emma," she mused, "as it is the conventions she represents. But she's so dreadfully intolerant and disagreeable that she makes me hate propriety. Why, Dick, I sued for freedom, and I'm not as free as I was before."

"Do you ever think of the bungalow, Nettie?" he asked after a pause.

"Do I!" she exclaimed. "I dreamed of it last night."

"We ought to have stayed there," he observed regretfully. "Everything went wrong when we came back to the city."

"Everything," she agreed.

"Do you remember the time you fell in the river?" he went on.

"And you pulled me out and carried me to the bungalow and put me to bed and dosed me with hot drinks?" she recalled with sparkling eyes. "Indeed, indeed I do. And do you remember the fish you didn't catch?"

"I was always forgetting the fish," he laughed, "when you were in the canoe with me, but I've never forgotten the ham and eggs and the muffins. That's the only place where you ever cooked for me, Nettie."

"That's the only place where we ever worked and played together, Dick," she returned. "It makes a difference."

"Too bad we can't do it over again, Nettie, and do it differently," he commented moodily. "We had such a chance!"

"Such a chance!" she repeated. "Why, we almost fell in love with each other there, Dick. Our marriage didn't seem worldly at the bungalow."

"But we came back to business and society and conflicting ideals and—divorce."

"And divorce," she said softly, almost reluctantly.

"When we might have—"

"Yes, Dick," she interrupted, "we might have, but we didn't. We were both too—"

She broke off suddenly, and Norvin, following her startled gaze, saw Mrs. Cooley majestically approaching their table. He felt like a boy caught in some mischief, and it made him angry. Why should he, a man grown, permit her to discomfit him thus? Why should Nettie submit to her espionage and autocratic rule?

Mrs. Cooley surveyed them through her lorgnette.

"I thought so," she remarked.

"Please don't make a scene here, Aunt Emma," pleaded Nettie.

Thus admonished, Mrs. Cooley seated herself at their table, which fortunately was in an obscure corner of the room.

"You have put me to a great deal of trouble," she said.

"We'd have been just as well satisfied if you hadn't taken the trouble," grumbled Norvin.

"I have some regard for Nettie's reputation," observed Mrs. Cooley icily, "even if you have not."

"Oh, piffle!" objected Norvin in disgust. "What's the harm in this? Nettie and I have dined together thousands of times."

"You and Nettie," was Mrs. Cooley's withering reply, "have done many things in the past that would be highly improper now. However, let us not discuss it here. It is enough that another cabman heard you give your destination and thus enabled me to redeem the situation by dining with you. Call a waiter, please."

Sulkily Norvin beckoned to their waiter, and Mrs. Cooley's order was added to the one he and Nettie had previously given.

"Thank Heaven," said Mrs. Cooley, "the business will be soon settled, and then there will be no further opportunity for these disgraceful antics."

"I shall still be Nettie's business agent," he reminded her.

"That business," she asserted, "can be transacted by mail."

"It can be," he retorted, "but I'm not sure that it will be."

"You are either a very foolish or a very vindictive man," she accused. "You seem determined to wreck Nettie's life, but I will protect her!"

"Oh, the devil!" he blurted out disgustedly.

Mrs. Cooley raised her lorgnette, but this had not its customary effect.

"We're going to the theater tonight," he announced, openly defiant.

"Have you a seat for me?" she asked.

"No," he answered, "and I don't intend to get one."

"Then Nettie shall not go!" she declared. "It would be highly improper. Even if it were otherwise proper, no girl can afford to be seen in public with a divorced man."

"But I'm a divorced woman!" expostulated Nettie.

"So much the worse!" said Mrs. Cooley. "I shall take you home with me after supper."

Norvin looked for signs of rebellion in Nettie's eyes. The signs were there, but the determination that would make rebellion effective was lacking. Mrs. Cooley, so great is the force of habit and the fear of gossip, was still dominant.

"Why—why, this is worse than being married," complained Nettie, after a moment of silence.

Norvin said nothing, but the remark turned his thoughts in a new direction. Certain facts, previously ignored as negligible, now assumed sudden importance. He turned them over in his mind during the dinner, which was enlivened only by occasional acrimonious remarks from Mrs. Cooley, and gradually his face relaxed in a smile.

"I have decided," he said, when they had reached the coffee, "to insist upon Nettie accompanying me to the theater this evening."

"Insist?" repeated Mrs. Cooley in a coldly inquiring tone.

"Insist," he replied.

"What right have you to insist?" demanded Mrs. Cooley.

Norvin delayed his reply a moment to make it more effective. "I am her husband—here," he answered calmly.

Nettie stared at him in amazement, and even Mrs. Cooley was rendered speechless.

"It has occurred to me," he explained, "that our divorce is not recognized in this State."

"Do you mean that we're married in one place and not in another?" asked Nettie, her eyes big with bewilderment and alarm.

"Precisely that," he replied.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Mrs. Cooley.

"Ask any lawyer," said Norvin. "The easy Western divorce is not recognized here, and divorcees frequently have to go elsewhere to be married again."

"But if they come back?" suggested Nettie.

Norvin shrugged his shoulders. "So long as no one is interested in bringing the matter up," he said, "there are no unpleasant complications. New York may be legally particular, but she is socially tolerant."

"Then we are still married in some States and divorced in others?"

"No doubt about it."

"And if either of us should marry again, it would be all right in some States and—and—"

"And all wrong in others," he prompted.

"How awkward," she commented dismally, "if one happened to be traveling!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Mrs. Cooley.

"I don't like it, Dick," Nettie went on plaintively. "I want to be all divorced or all married."

"Impossible," he returned, "unless—"

"Yes, Dick, yes?" she urged eagerly.

"Unless we're married again," he suggested, with a little of both doubt and wistfulness in his tone. "That would restore uniform conditions."

Her face brightened, but despair followed. "Oh, we can't, we can't, Dick!" she wailed. "The decree says neither of us can marry again for a year."

"I should hope not!" put in Mrs. Cooley.

"Damn that decree!" muttered Nor-

vin. "It leaves us intermittently married, like one of those alarm clocks that ring and stop and ring again."

"I shall take Nettie out of this State," declared Mrs. Cooley, "and keep her out! I shall permit her to set foot in no State that does not recognize her divorce."

"Do be quiet, Aunt Emma!" said Nettie, with unexpected acerbity. "Dick and I have troubles enough now."

"Nettie!" reproved Mrs. Cooley. "I should not permit this remarriage, anyhow."

"You wouldn't have anything to say about it!" retorted Norvin.

"Not a thing!" echoed Nettie. "We'd be married in spite of you."

"If only to defy you!" added Norvin.

"Think of being married in one State and not being married in another," moaned Nettie, reverting to their distressing predicament, "and not being allowed to marry when you ought to marry and—and—want to marry! Think of having to ask a lawyer every time you go anywhere whether you're married or not!"

"Huh!" snorted Mrs. Cooley, thoroughly aroused. "It's a good thing you silly fools don't know that the prohibition doesn't apply—"

Suddenly mindful of what she was saying, she stopped abruptly, but it was too late.

"By George!" exclaimed Norvin, his face lighting up and his tone jubilant. "By George, she's right! The prohibition doesn't apply to the remarriage of the same parties. There's no reason why it should, and it would defeat its own purpose if it did."

Nettie gave a little gasp of surprise and pleasure.

"We can start again, Nettie," he went on, speaking softly now; "we can start again at the bungalow. Shall we?" Their eyes met across the table. "Shall we, Nettie? Shall we blot out the intervening time and

go back to that? Is it—isn't it worth while?"

"Yes," breathed Nettie; "and this time I'll try—"

"We'll both try, Nettie," he interrupted. "There's so much we can do that we didn't do."

"So much, Dick," she agreed.

He beckoned for the bill. "We'll make our fresh start at once," he said.

Mrs. Cooley, interposing no objection, trailed out after them. Mrs. Cooley's expression was peculiar, not at all what one would have expected in the circumstances. She was still with them when the carriage the doorman called arrived.

"You'll take me home, I suppose," she suggested.

"Yes," returned Norvin reluctantly, "we'll do that, of course."

Ignoring Mrs. Cooley, Norvin drew Nettie close to him when they were in the carriage. Mrs. Cooley seemed quite subdued.

"Are you sure you regret the divorce?" she asked.

"I hate myself for ever even thinking of it!" exclaimed Nettie.

"And that you want to be married again?" persisted Mrs. Cooley.

"I'd like to see anybody try to stop us!" growled Norvin.

"I managed it rather cleverly, don't you think?" remarked Mrs. Cooley. The dim light was sufficient to show that she was now beaming upon them benignly. "You needed a little opposition and a few obstacles," she added, "to bring you to your senses."

"Aunt Emma!" cried Nettie, straightening up suddenly.

Mrs. Cooley chuckled, actually chuckled, in a most plebeian way.

"Aunt Emma," said Norvin, when he had finally grasped the full meaning of this, "you're the cleverest woman in the world; and I'll show my appreciation by giving you a proxy kiss. Nettie, kiss Aunt Emma for me; and then," he added, "kiss me for Aunt Emma."



ABOUT WOMEN—BY A MERE MAN

By THOMAS L. MASSON

I HAVE often thought that I would like to try the experiment of loving the same woman twice—but I have never dared to give up the time to it.

I spent yesterday with the cleverest girl in all the world. It has taken me all the time since then to recover from the conviction of my own importance.

The length of time it takes to get around a girl's waist is not always in proportion to its size.

The woman who stands in front of her door and looks up and down the street is not always looking for her husband.

I never stood well in chemistry. That is why I derive no enjoyment from making up to a made-up woman.

It would be impossible for me to respect any woman who did not have the capacity to make me suffer.

To a sick man, every trained nurse under forty is a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

It has been said that women never provide for the future. To this Eve stands as a permanent contradiction.

Every woman resents in her heart the man who respects her for her character alone.

You can always tell that moment when girlhood has departed and womanhood has begun. It is at this point that she never has anything to wear.

When, without consulting a woman, a man can order a dinner at a restaurant with which she is perfectly satisfied, he has arrived at the fulness of his power; there is nothing more for him to achieve.

It is a wise woman who knows when to resent unfamiliarity.

No woman ever acquired virtue or had it thrust upon her.

The unconventional woman needs no chaperon.

THE OLD HILLS AND FURTHER

By MADISON CAWEIN

OLD hills, that break the far horizon's fall,
Within my heart again I hear your call,
Bidding me on to Circe mysteries
Of forest where dark pooléd waters lie,
In whose enchanted glass the wildwood sees
Its form reflected and the dreams go by,
Of silence and of solitude, who keep
Watch round its mirror, gazing long and deep.

My hills! Oft peopled with the ghosts of rain,
Pale mists that gather and dissolve again;
Gray exhalations that in cool retreats
Of foam and glimmer, o'er the slim cascade,
Fling wild a rainbow, or in slender sheets
Of foggy stealth phantom the dripping glade;
Where Witchcraft cabins with her wildflower spells,
Taking the wood with magic of their bells.

Hills, that the moon's white feet how oft have kissed,
Where pale Endymion and his dreams keep tryst,
Where the white soul of Beauty doth preside,
Whispering her legends to the cradled flowers,
Of filmy things, moth-gowned and firefly-eyed,
Who lace the ways and gossamer the bowers
With webs for dew and starlight, and bewitch
The wood with pearl until each weed is rich.

Hills, from whose breasts in drowsy fancy rise
The fragrant thoughts of flowers, their perfumed sighs,
And the damp dreams of fungus, imagings
Of haunters of the ferns who through the night
Speed thin the tumult of invisible wings,
That take the heart with terror and delight,
Dreaming it hears the nymph that fled from Pan
And all the immortal myths that with her ran.

Old hills! Beyond you, in my soul I know,
Still lies the Wonderland of Long Ago,
High-Avaloned, deep-valleyed, elfed with streams,
Where old Enchantment builds her bower of bloom,
And Magic rears her City of Lost Dreams,
Templed with glory that no time shall doom,
The shadow of whose wonders, as of old,
Still lures me in the sunset's towers of gold.

SELF-ASSERTION—A NATIONAL NEED

By JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

WHAT we Americans need, now that we have passed out of the swaddling clothes of provincialism into the full dress trousers of a world powerful nationhood, is a little more self-assertion.

Despite Shakespeare's dictum that "in times of peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility," the hour has long since faded into the calendars of the past when such an attitude was becoming to us. In view of things as they are, not theories, by any manner of means, but stern conditions, we are by all means too modest. We are a self-effacing people, as all men know who have studied us and our characteristics as a people deeply, and we carry our self-effacement too far. It is true that in the past the meek have inherited the earth, but in our day the meek have shown such an incapacity for hanging on to their inheritance that a vast acreage thereof has been transferred to the bloated and the puffed. The high places have gone over to the swollen, and the end is not yet. As a nation it is time we waked up to a realization of what we may call our "Supreme Itness in the World of Achievement," and not only that, but to the necessity for its assertion everywhere and upon all occasions. Prior to Admiral Dewey's sudden and sensational transformation of the ships of Spain into a thoroughly disorganized collection of toothpicks, it was all very well for us to take the modest stand in respect to ourselves and the results of our efforts, so charmingly characteristic of our immediate forbears, that

we were, after all, merely a by-product in the great factory of nations; but at the moment when Dewey's elated guns boomed forth their thunderous message on the stillness of that Eastern night at the mouth of Cavite there dawned the day of our supremacy among the peoples of the earth, and nothing is to be gained by pretending, as we are so prone to do, that we do not know it.

For a long time we have held the view that, like some motorists, we are too coy with the horn. We are plunging along on the Highway of National Greatness without sufficiently notifying the rest of the world of our presence thereon, and merely because we have made modesty a habit, out of respect, no doubt, to the teachings of our fathers. But with all due respect to this filial regard for the example of our progenitors and their teachings, this habit is no longer a virtue. The hour has outgrown it, just as it has outgrown the stagecoach, the pony express and the quill pen. What the time really demands is more of the honk and less of the gumshoe in our triumphal progress through the boulevards of effort to the heights of achievement, for what doth it profit a man to progress triumphantly with never a blast from an acclaiming trumpet?

Feeling thus, it was quite a relief to read the other day, printed beneath a picture in an esteemed contemporary devoted to gardening and its allied interests, the simple legend:

A HOUSE IN MANCHESTER
(THE ENGLISH PITTSBURG)

Now that is the sort of thing we like to see. It breathes the true patriotic spirit, too long held in abeyance by our cloak of humility. It was not a "House in Pittsburg (the American Manchester)" that the editor presented to our gaze, as it used formerly to be, but "contrariwise," as Tweedledum says to Tweedledee in Lewis Carroll's immortal story "Through the Looking Glass." No longer is it Pittsburg that stands in need of elucidation, but Manchester, that ancient city of the Britons, so long herself the standard by which Pittsburg and other American industrial communities have been measured—Manchester, known even to the Romans in their one time forays centuries ago into the lands of the British—Manchester, as early as A.D. 620 wrested from the hands of the Britons by Edwin, King of Northumbria, and turned over to the Angles for settlement. The pendulum, so many years swinging to one side, has now retraced its steps and heaved mightily in the other direction, and from this day on it is to be "Manchester, the Pittsburg of England," and no longer "Pittsburg, the Manchester of America."

It is, indeed, a worthy beginning, but we must not be satisfied with merely beginning. We must throw off the mantle of our self-effacement and fight this thing to a finish—aye, even unto that day when, if we refer to London as the Brooklyn of the British Empire, or to Paris as the Emporia of France, or to Athens as the Boston of Greece, or even to Berlin as the Cincinnati of Europe, everyone will know precisely what we mean.

Nor must we confine the fight to material things alone. In matters of the spirit we have men as preëminently superfine as we have cities, whose names may serve as standards of elucidation all the world over. It has too long been the custom of critics, even in our own country and native born, to identify, or rather to classify, American authors by the use of a foreign tag. Sometimes it has pleased even the individual thus tagged to be called

publicly, and without the interference of his own press agent, "the Dickens of America," or "the Thackeray of Tioga County," or "the Henry James of South Dakota." But we are no longer in the fledgling literary stage, as we appeared to be in the days when all we had to show along literary lines were a few shelves full of poetry and essays by Longfellow and Emerson and some clever but wholly provincial fiction writers like Edgar Allan Poe and James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and it is not fitting therefore that we should continue to bear the tags that once rejoiced us. We have emerged from that chrysalis state, and it is full time we let the universe understand that we know it, by defying the tags of other lands and other ages, and not only that, but by doing a little aggressive tagging on our own account.

It has always vexed us exceedingly in the past to hear the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich described by literary bigwigs in and out of this country as "the Herrick of America." Herrick, forsooth! A goodly poet, no doubt, and we have nothing to say against him as long as he and his friends stay where they belong and do not try to inch up to where they do not belong. Indeed, we admire Herrick, and would consider our shelves bereft of much that is lovely and appealing if he were to be taken away from us. But, much as we have delighted in him, and fond of him as we have ever been and shall ever continue to be, whether in his "Hesperides," his "Noble Numbers" or his "Ignoble Epigrams," we protest against this undue elevation of such a poet as he is by using him as an *éclaircissement* of Aldrich. It is impossible to submit tamely to the imposition of such a tag, so limited, after all, in its significance, upon a native poet whose only limitation, in so far as his work shows that he had any at all, was that imposed by his own scrupulous regard for the literary artistry of his work and his own integrity as a loyal follower of lofty literary ideals. Compare this of Herrick's:

Give me a cell
To dwell
Where no foot hath
A path;
There will I spend
And end
My wearied years
In tears.

Compare, we say, this bit of lyrical gloom from the pen of the tag, with the Miltonic splendor of Aldrich's sonnet beginning

I vex me not with brooding on the years,
and you will have a fair example of the propriety of this tagging system so long in vogue, as it has worked in the past and has been worked even by certain acknowledged leaders in American literary criticism. And then when you have it settled in your own mind, as you most assuredly will have it if you have any literary discernment at all, how unjust it is to put the Herrick label on such a poet as Aldrich was, you may consider further whether in the whole range of the work of this seventeenth century lyrist there was any sign of even so little as the germ of Tom Bailey, or so much as a glimpse into the doings of the Bad Boy of Rivermouth, the narration of which has in other lines than poetry done so much to place the imperishable laurels upon the brow of the "American Herrick"!

No, indeed! As we have already intimated, it is high time that this habit of blowing foreign names into American literary bottles were stopped and the general plan of operations entirely reversed. We shall not object if someone ventures to call Mr. Hall Caine the Laura Jean Libbey of the British Islands, or to refer to Mr. Anthony Hope as the George Barr McCutcheon of Hyde Park. Likewise will it be immaterial to us if some critic shall speak of Mr. Alfred Austin, who is paid for his song in Canary and sings like one, the Bloodgood H. Cutter of Piccadilly, or the Horace Dodd Gastit of Bloomsbury Square. It is the right of all people who like the tag system to use it when describing themselves or their own, but when they try, as

they have successfully done in the past, to tag us, let us rise up in our might and return the tag with interest. It is not enough that we throw off the shackles we have worn so humbly these centuries upon centuries, through modesty in respect to our own achievements in the past. We must carry on an aggressive campaign of retaliation as well. We must carry the war into Africa.

When someone mentions to us the name of Dickens we must assert ourselves, and assuming a patronizing air, reply: "Dickens? Ah, yes. The Richard Harding Davis of Seven Dials. Yes, he was very good, very good, indeed—excellent, in fact. We have read nothing of his except 'Daisy Miller,' and we liked it—liked it very much; but do you think it at all comparable as a bit of literary *genre* to 'Van Bibber'?"

Or if Thackeray is spoken of, let us scratch our heads meditatively and murmur: "Thackeray, Thackeray—yes, we've heard that name somewhere. Let me see—he was a sort of Pre-Raphaelite Robert W. Chambers, was he not? Or was he that sort of British Churchill who wrote 'Vanity Square' or some such book in the early sixties of the last century?" Of course we must do these things in such a way that the person to whom our remarks are addressed will fully understand that we know well enough that Dickens did not write "Daisy Miller," and that we are quite aware that Thackeray as a writer of keen satire and irreproachable English had undeniable claims to distinction. In short, our irony must be perceived by the consignee if it is to be at all effective, and it would leave us far short of the bull's-eye of our desires if in shooting at this particular target our exhibition of aggressive American assertiveness left behind it only an impression of a vastitudinous ignorance.

Moreover, we must carry this war of the tags into all fields of human endeavor consistently and unremittingly. If anyone in talking to us on the subject of Socialism shall mention the name of Bernard Shaw, let us reply: "Oh, yes, we know Shaw. He is the Emma Goldman of Trafalgar Square." At

dinners, if we are asked if we care for caviare, we must refer to it in replying as the "Hudson River shad roe of the Novski Prospekt." An allusion to Munich should elicit the intimation that it is a sort of Worcester, Mass., with "made in Germany" stamped on the bottom. Rome will in time become the "Mulberry Bend of Italy"; Poole, the gentleman who makes buckskin breeches by special appointment to all the royal personages of Great Britain and the Continent, will be dubbed the "Rogers Peet of the Court of St. James," and so on through the whole gamut of human affairs. We may even carry things into the past, making our assertiveness retroactive, and so making up for lost time, and if we choose to, tag the Immortals—and so long as we have the goods, why not choose to, and deliver them? Demosthenes? Why, yes—the Albert J. Beveridge of Greece. Diogenes looking for an honest man? Surely—the William Gaynor of Athens. Julius Cæsar? Certainly—the Theodore Roosevelt of Rome. Cleopatra? Of course—the Carrie Nation of Egypt. Midas? Well, rather—the Andrew Carockernegie of Mythology. Venus? Unquestionably—the Lillian Russell of Olympus, and so on all along the line until everything in sight or out of it, spiritual or material, bears the tag of Uncle Sam!

It is not too great a task, either. For many a year the roast beef of Old England, famous in song and story and sung by countless millions in the balladry of the outlaw and the troubadour, has borne upon it the Chicago

stamp; no end of antique bureaus, bedsteads, highboys and whatnots, imported to deck our homes from the baronial halls of other lands, have revealed upon a closer inspection the dark brown brand of the irons of Grand Rapids. We believe it is no secret that many an outward bound steamer from American ports has borne in her hold yard upon yard of Yonkers-made carpets for reimportation into the United States as the best product of Axminster and Brussels; and we have sometimes suspected, in looking over the rare bits of Gobelin tapestry placed on exhibition in the windows of Fifth Avenue as a lure to the millionaire interested in such things, that if these priceless objects were traced back to their original sources they would be found to have sprung from the books of some New England spinster, who, having no husband to look after, could find time for the weaving of so glorious a fabric.

Wherefore, let us assert ourselves. Let us give over this foolish modesty so characteristic of us as a people. Let us take our lights from under the obscuring bushels of humility by which they have too long been hid, and everlastingly ram ourselves and our products down the throats of the universe, until we shall reach that glad day when even an allusion to Shakespeare made by anybody, anywhere in the civilized globe, to anybody else, shall be met with the answer: "Shakespeare? Oh, yes. You mean the Gus Thomas of Avon."

Then shall we have come into our own!



THE modern fool rushes to glory and fame where the savant stands hesitating on his dignity.



A MAN is most cruel when he hates, a woman when she fears.

DULCE ET DECORUM

By OLIVIA HOWARD DUNBAR

ALTHOUGH obscure to the general ear, the first faint rumblings of war had nevertheless been heard. A few discreet newspaper editorials had sounded a muffled warning, and various Persons of Importance who had gone to confer at Washington returned obviously disturbed. To General Paulding, whose connection, even since his retirement, with the seats of the mighty had been remarkably close, the situation seemed acutely critical. Not without national ignominy, the General confided to his wife at breakfast, could the issue be avoided; and it would be one of the great wars of history—no trivial encounter.

Then, when he had said something of this sort, the two old people looked away from each other, for each knew what was in the other's mind. They were silent for a little; then the General, spreading his paper open with a flourish at its editorial page, inquired with elaborate casualness:

"Have you heard from Randy?"

"Only a note since he was here. As usual, we know nothing of him," the mother answered, her entire figure becoming stiffened, as though, in connection with Randy, one must beware of relaxation or compromise. "Although I don't doubt the little Crocheron girl has letters." There is an inimitable tone in which a mother not in her son's confidence makes an allusion of this sort.

"M'm. The *Tribune*," announced the General, his deliberate syllables trembling with bitterness. "devotes an entire column this morning to reporting a speech that John Crocheron made last night at Cooper Union! Probably

there wasn't an American in his audience. And certainly there isn't a word in all this immigration talk of his that an American ought not to be ashamed of."

"Oh, the man's a charlatan, of course," his wife hastily agreed, partly because her own instincts were conservative, partly because it was understood that the General's roof sheltered no divided minds.

Of late years it had become the custom of this rather frail pair to prolong their breakfast hour in this sunny, spacious room, because it was an occupation that so agreeably hid their weakness from themselves. At seventy, a day lying before one to be filled may present its blank tablet of hours with positively merciless interrogation. The General, returning to the paper, in which he never skipped a paragraph, alternately set his horn-rimmed glasses on his nose and took them off again, as though they were mere playthings, a pastime for his white, shriveled fingers—he had never yet been willing to admit that he could not read a word without them. Opposite him, his wife's straight back was held a resolute inch or so from the disdained support of her chair, and her stern eyes, beneath the rather grimly arranged hair, were bent anxiously upon her husband's age-smitten face and shrunken figure. Leaning forward a little, as if to exclude possible listeners, she suggested:

"If you don't mind, I should like to write this to Randy—what you have just told me about the war. After all, it may—he might—"

"What? Oh, not a word of it!"

The General again became absorbed in his editorials, this time without his glasses. "I won't have any appeal made to him. He'll know it soon enough, Susan; they'll all know it. A month, perhaps."

Conversations about Randolph never got much further than this, nowadays. The thoughts that it was the young man's misfortune to suggest to his family were mostly not of the sort that could be spoken aloud. They had felt this for a long time, Randolph himself, perhaps, most keenly of all. Even during his recent brief visit, although it was a year since they had seen him, there had been this painful dumbness, this oppression of unsaid things. There was something wrong with Randolph, as his mother chose to put it—something from which his distinguished father was the chief sufferer, but which anyone of the Paulding name must also lament. It was true that the situation wore a different aspect to certain people of a different sort—to little Laura Crocheron. But then, what were the Crocherons? Notoriously, little better than Anarchists.

So nothing more was said of the absent son, although the mother's mind was filled with him, as she watched the General make ready for his morning walk. The old man believed it to be his own shameful secret that during the past few years this daily excursion had shrunk from a brave, soldierly stretch of the Avenue to a miserable ten blocks; and he took care to be gone from home long enough to conceal the discrepancy. On this morning an ugly raw wind circled about in the vestibule; and Mrs. Paulding thought she saw her husband's face grow even whiter at the touch of it. Well, it might be that he had become the frail, pitiful sport of unconsidering winds and weathers; but, at all events, no human adversary had ever worsted him!

Left alone, with the long day ahead of her, the General's wife began diligently to recall those solaces of hers that never could be lessened or outlived. It did not seem, nowadays,

that there was much to look ahead to; but how few women had such glories to remember? She had married her hero with his honors full upon him; and she had loved him, she had married him, for his heroism. To no Roman woman did military glory or the qualities that make a great commander ever seem more supremely admirable. It was her pride, scarcely less than her husband's, that the Paulding family had always been soldiers, patriots. And she recalled now the stern exultation that had filled her when she had first realized that her privilege was an even greater one than that of being the young General's wife; it was to be that of prolonging his distinguished line, of being, in her turn, the mother of heroes.

But the girls had been born first, Abby and Christine. Melancholy as was the disqualification of their sex, they were, after all, a soldier's children. No vacillating temperaments befuddled the destinies of those militant young creatures. Abby had married an army officer the year after she left school, and Christine, a born soldier, was vigorously engaged, although she had stooped to become the wife of a civilian, in training a small army of boys to emulate their illustrious grandfather. Yet, in spite of their exemplary traits, the girls were not forgiven for not being swordbearers. It may even be that they were not forgiven when the Pauldings' son was born, for the child was not sturdy like his sisters, but frail and passive, and it was by no means an easy matter to trace in his tender outlines the forbidding aquilinity of his forefathers.

It was, of course, never considered necessary to discuss the choice of a career for the General's only son. Almost before he abandoned rattles the banners of war were flourished before the little eaglet's eyes, and the stories of battles sounded in his ears; and at an exceedingly immature period he already realized that he was some day going to West Point, which seemed to be an institution maintained for the glory of the Pauldings. And he knew

that he must let story books alone and play out of doors as much as possible, so that he would grow strong and some day become a great soldier, for that was what it meant to be a Paulding. Then, when the time had come and a place at the Academy stood ready for General Paulding's son, the physicians had said that he was not strong enough to enter, implying, however, that in a few years the youthful weakness might be reinforced. With no expression of disappointment, the boy suggested that he be allowed to take certain special courses at Harvard. The General's consent, his wife secretly believed, was the outcome of his sudden desire to have Randolph out of sight. It was not an easy thing to see one's only son a weakling.

At Cambridge the boy developed rapidly in more directions than his parents saw. What they could not fail to see, however, was that after four years of it he looked as strong as any youth of his age. Nothing was the matter with Randy, the family exclaimed to each other. He might have gone to West Point, after all. But in the meantime Randolph had attained an age and an attitude of mind where he could no longer be manipulated, as was evident enough from the first independent act of his manhood—for the full measure of his father's vituperative contempt could not alter the young man's mild-eyed decision to go to live and work among the immigrant population of Chicago.

But it was scarcely such matters as these, immitigably painful, that Mrs. Paulding had chosen to reflect upon. Only, after her husband's confidences of the morning, how could a mother fail to remember all that Randolph, poor, obstinate, eccentric boy, was not and should have been?

A maid stood at the door. "Miss Crocheron telephones to know if she may find Mrs. Paulding at home in ten minutes."

"Yes." The delayed answer came with excessive crispness. "I shall be here."

It did not seem worth while, in so

flagrant a case of invasion, wholly to conceal her annoyance. What could be the delicacy of a young woman who, although a mere acquaintance, chose so to presume upon—well, upon whatever understanding existed between herself and Randolph? If she were canvassing for the suffragists, as was undoubtedly the case, she might at least have presented her card at the door in civilized fashion. There was, of course, a certain satisfaction to the General's wife in the knowledge that the canvasser would meet with precious little success in her enterprise; and she waited in a kind of grim complacency until word was brought her that the girl was downstairs.

At the first glimpse of her guest, Mrs. Paulding recalled with some irritation the comments which were currently made upon the girl and which, to her exacting vision, Miss Crocheron's present appearance seemed so little to justify. She was dressed like a careless boy; and she had an oddly boyish fashion of stretching out her small, thickly gloved hand. There was an almost childish eagerness in her voice, and she spoke with a perhaps not too deferential haste.

"Mrs. Paulding, I have taken the liberty of coming to you for a few minutes' talk about Randolph. You know, we are very good friends."

Mrs. Paulding smiled rather a terrible little smile and motioned to her visitor to sit down. If her experience had crowned her with any accomplishment, it was that of making what she considered the wrong people feel that they had said the wrong thing. Then, the gnawing of a desperate desire and the sight of this young alien creature's confidence and strength in a mysteriously brief interval provoked in the grim old woman a desperate resolve.

"This friendship of yours with my son, Miss Crocheron," she brought herself to say—"is it of such a sort that your advice has weight with him?"

"Why, I believe—of course; I know it has!"

A manner without a trace of decent

reserve in it, Mrs. Paulding decided; but she masterfully went on:

"Then, you can use it, now, to do a great service for him, and for his family."

"I am very glad—" Laura Crocheron innocently began; but the older woman continued, unnoticing:

"You may possibly have heard that a war is threatened. In case you have not, I must ask you to regard this as a confidence. My husband, of course, has information which—"

"Yes, I understand, Mrs. Paulding."

"Perhaps you will understand, too, that to our family it seems unthinkable that there should be a war unless a Paulding stands at the front. You know, I suppose, why my son did not receive a military education, why he is not in the army now. But if there is to be a great war— The General has said nothing of it; the whole matter is one he feels too keenly; but I may tell you that, of course, a captaincy of volunteers could be secured for Randolph. He could be given a chance. And he is a Paulding, after all! We cannot propose it to him, his father and I—but I do ask it of you, Miss Crocheron, to bring word to me that Randolph will agree to what I have suggested."

Laura Crocheron answered without an instant's hesitation. "But surely, Mrs. Paulding, you know it is unthinkable that Randolph should consent to such a thing! And it is quite as unthinkable that I should ask him. If you will let me talk to you—"

"But, my dear young woman—when you yourself are without military traditions—"

"That is quite true, Mrs. Paulding." The girl spoke with intense pride. "The men of our family have been philosophers and scholars."

"Students of other things, possibly," came the coldly smiling retort, "than our country's good—or our country's history. The Pauldings—"

"You mean that my father was born in France. But you surely would not insist upon a mere perpetuation of the stock of the early colonists? You know that Randolph says—"

"Oh, Randolph!" The mother's contemptuous tone showed that the girl had cited the authority in least repute in that household.

Laura Crocheron lost her pretense of calm. "Mrs. Paulding, if you can speak in that way, it cannot be that you know what Randolph's work is, how heroic and how beautiful. Do you feel no pride in him? What other man has even dreamed of doing what Randolph has done? And what more could a man do than give his intelligence, his heart, his life?"

"But in doing that he is inviting the very hordes that General Paulding believes are the curse of our country."

"But do you yourself believe that, Mrs. Paulding? You could not if you knew. You could not believe what you do of Randolph if you knew. He is so reticent—I wonder if he tells you the little things about his life there?" The girl, keeping her eyes closely fixed on Mrs. Paulding's face, hesitated, then saw that she might go on. "He believes, of course, that the heart of his whole work is caring for the children. And he works so wonderfully and to such good purpose to keep them out of factories, to send them to school and to have them cared for when they are not in school. Oh, if you could know what they say of him there—what such men as my father say of him! And I happen to know of one very small detail of his life. Whenever a child in that great crowded district he lives in is left uncared for, Randolph, if it is possible, takes charge of it until a suitable home is found, rather than allow it to be sent away. So most of the time his own little house is filled with waifs; and every day he has nurses come in to care for them, and many times when they are ill he stays up all night with them himself. The neighbors call him their little father."

Mrs. Paulding did not speak, but she had listened.

Laura Crocheron went on. "That is one of a thousand ways he spends himself. But it is all toward one end. His whole strength is bent toward the

tender saving of life." She paused, then added with a sharp challenge: "And you want him to *destroy*?"

"It is no news to me, Miss Crocheron, that my son is gentle and generous. But those, after all, are a great soldier's qualities. And he is a Paulding, and his father's namesake."

"Dear Mrs. Paulding, he is more than that!" It would not have been difficult to guess the feeling of this girl who stood solemnly proclaiming her lover's glory. "There is something that I came to tell you; you will have wondered why I came this morning. But it hasn't been easy to tell. This morning I had a letter—you will see that it makes it so much less disturbing that it *was* a letter, and not a telegram—from Randolph's friend, Sloane, who lives with him you know. Randolph is somewhat ill, but was unwilling to send word to you and to General Paulding for fear of alarming you. He did, however, allow Sloane to write to me—and to ask me—to come to him. So at one o'clock today my father is to take me. Sloane begged me not to be alarmed, so I am sure that none of us should be. But in case the situation should be worse than we believe, my father and I both thought that you ought to know of my going. That is all I came to say—except that I have not told you why he is ill."

"Naturally you will tell me all that you know of my son's illness." The mother's face had colored slightly, but her manner indicated almost superhuman repression.

"What I understood from the letter was that a great injustice was practised by the owner of a tenement that was filled with Russians, most of them lately immigrated. The rent was raised without proper warning, and when the poor people could not pay it they were turned out into the street with their children and all the pitiful things they clung to. None of them could speak English serviceably and they sent for Randolph. He did his best to act as interpreter, and forced the agent to allow the people to go back into their homes until they could

find others. But in the meantime there had been a slight disturbance—they did not explain it to me—but one or two shots were fired and Randolph was hurt—shot in the shoulder."

Mrs. Paulding had risen from her chair. "Randy shot! And in a low scuffle of that sort! Randy!"

"Mrs. Paulding, did the General never receive a wound in battle?"

"But that is blasphemy! And I beg of you, do not tell anyone of this. I could never allow the General to know that Randy had been hurt in such disgraceful fashion. It would kill him!"

The outer door opened and someone entered from the street. Then came the sound of General Paulding's voice asking for his wife. Imperatively detaining her guest, Mrs. Paulding rose and met the General at the door of the drawing-room. The old man's face was stiff and expressionless, and loosely gripped in his hand was a copy of an evening newspaper. Ignoring the young girl, he demanded:

"Susan, has anything been kept from me—in regard to Randolph? I see that you do know something. The result of this concealment has been that I first learned of the matter at my club. A stranger showed me the newspaper containing this shocking report. I have it here in my hand." He flourished it feebly. "I must ask you to tell me how much of it is true."

"But I knew of it only a moment ago," Mrs. Paulding answered breathlessly. She was all sudden gentleness now, since her husband's entrance. "Miss Crocheron came to tell me. Randy is hurt only a little—a slight injury."

"A slight injury! Have you read this paper? The report may be a lie—it probably is—but in the absence of any communication to myself, I am obliged to—"

"Come, dear, and sit down." Laura noticed that Mrs. Paulding seemed to be more deeply affected by the sight of her husband's emotion than she had been by the news of her son. And she saw, too, with bewilderment, that

the son was to be defended—for his father's sake. "I can show you how it happened," the eager wife began, reaching about rather vaguely for her explanation of the thing she was still as far from understanding as the General himself. "Poor Randy mistakenly wished to spare us. He believed, I suppose, that the affair had been successfully kept from the newspapers. It is like him, of course, as it is like you, to make light of suffering. That dreadful life of his takes him so often into danger—and he was—he was on duty when he was hurt!"

"On duty! He was meddling. It was a street brawl. And I learn of it through this vulgar paper and in language that I find most offensive. What do you know about his injury, Susan?"

"He was shot in the shoulder, but not seriously, for Miss Crocheron has just heard from Mr. Sloane. And it was an accident, and happened only because Randy was protecting some wretched creatures who couldn't speak English—"

A servant softly interrupted. "A telegram, sir."

The two women stood pale and silent while the General tore open the portentous envelope, then hunted for his glasses. When it became plain that in his agitation he could not find them, Mrs. Paulding reached toward him. "Let me read it, dear." Then, a moment later, in a hesitating, unnatural voice: "It is from Sloane."

A too complete understanding paralyzed the listeners for a moment; then the old General spoke firmly:

"I understand, Susan. The boy is dead."

"He died this morning." The mother's mysterious self-command yielded only to a sudden tender movement toward the General, lest he sink or faint from what she, almost with calmness, had told him. The last of the Pauldings, still young and strong,

had been cut off; how should a father survive such news?

"The boy is dead," the old man repeated, stunned.

The girl peered out from her smothering grief and found it unbearable that the two old people could not weep, that neither dared console the other. A powerful impulse sent her, the tears running thickly down her face, to the General's side; and she took in her own, with a fierce, protecting tenderness, the old man's slender, shriveled hand.

"He died a patriot, General Paulding," she cried in a clear, courageous voice. "He died for his country. He died the sweetest death, the hero's death!"

The old man did not feel her touch nor hear her words. "Dear Randy!" they heard him say faintly. "Dear little boy!" And then, rousing himself: "Dead in a street brawl!"

The General's surrender seemed to be a positive relief to his wife, whose temperament rebelled at passive suffering. She called imperatively for a servant. "We have had bad news. The General is ill and must be helped upstairs. And a glass of brandy for him, quickly."

In the hour that followed Laura gave to her Randy's mother and father all that her widowed heart could yield of love and tenderness. And when, numb and blind from her grief, she left them, they were moaning together—of their infant son. He had failed to become the man they had appointed; so to them it was as though he had never become a man at all. His parents—oh, but she pitied them—mourned, would always mourn, their willful child, their Paulding gone astray. For the woman who loved him was reserved that severe ecstasy for which the others had always longed—the joy of knowing that it was a brave man who had died, a fighter for his country, a martyr in the cause of peace.



THE best cure for one love affair is—another.

THE GLORY OF THE TREES

By EMMA PLAYTER SEABURY

O H, the beauty of the trees!
How they gleam against the blue
In a tracery of lace!
And the sun with shining face
Hangs his jewels glinting through:
Boles of brown and boles of gray,
Reaching boughs and fluted leaves,
Lines of grace that move and sway,
Shaded greens that flow away,
In the texture Nature weaves,
Like the tangled weed of seas.
Oh, the beauty of the trees!

Oh, the glory of the trees!
How they greet us in the spring
With a wealth of bud and bloom,
With a laugh at winter's gloom!
How they woo the birds to sing!
What a hiding place for nests,
What a shade in summer heat,
What a flame and glow invests
Like sun roses in the west
When the royal Autumn's feet
Press her vineyards to their lees!
Oh, the glory of the trees!

Oh, the lesson of the trees!
Linger where their charm beguiles,
Look up through the dome of leaves,
Spangled with its starry cleaves:
Floating shallops, silver isles
From the cloud rifts drift along;
How the branches bend and croon,
How they keep the summer's song,
Through the winter's sting and thong,
And the burning heart of June,
Through the gloom, the light foresee!
Oh, the lesson of the tree!

THE GLORY OF THE TREES

Oh, to love and spare the trees!
 Pan is in his temples still,
 But the sylvan gods complain,
 Vengefully withholding rain
 From the sterile plain and hill;
 Bursting bonds of rivers wide,
 Sending flood and black debris
 Down bare mead and mountainside
 In a devastating tide,
 They demand their penalties.
 Spare the trees, oh, spare the trees!

Oh, the music of the trees!
 First a murmur, then a sigh
 On their harp with quivering string,
 Then a song that lovers sing,
 Then a mother's lullaby;
 Then afar a rising swell
 Like the waves that sob and swarm,
 And the organ's deep-toned bell,
 Diapason note and knell,
 And the booming of the storm;
 Then it dies along the keys.
 Oh, the music of the trees!

Oh, the altars of the trees!
 What an incense swings and sways
 All around its scented shrines!
 How the poet's soul divines
 All their hymns of prayer and praise,
 From the fern fronds by the pool,
 Which the sanctuaries twine
 From the leaves and mosses cool.
 Oh, to learn in Nature's school
 Means to learn the things divine.
 Earthbound soul, bend here your knees
 At the altars of the trees.



LIFE AND DEATH

By LURANA W. SHELDON

WE do not live until we know the pain
 Of that deep sorrow whose strong talons lie
 Sunk in the heart, to gnaw and gnaw again—
 Then, knowing life, we suffer on and die!

AT THE OLD WELL

By FRANK H. SHAW

HOBHOUSE realized subconsciously that something had happened, though every conscious thought was occupied in cursing his mishap. The ground on which he had dropped, with some considerable force, had rung hollow to the impact, and a cloud of dust had arisen. Subsiding, it left a slight depression running evenly, and the depression formed a perfect square. A small square only, and it was not until he had gathered himself together, had examined with the carefulness of a man who hates pain the abrasions on his hands and knees, and had brushed the dust from his clothes, that the real meaning of this unexpected discovery came with full force into his brain.

"It looks as if it might be a trapdoor," he muttered, interpolating hysterical curses between the words. "But there'd never be a trapdoor hereabouts. Still—" He sought about and found the axe he had been carrying—it had fallen from his shoulder in his downward plunge—and with it he tried the shallow cracks that formed the square.

"They go deep," he thought, working doggedly, with no real motive, simply actuated by his curiosity. "Shouldn't wonder if it was a trapdoor—likely been a still at one time." Five seconds later his axe rang dully on timber; he rose upright and wiped his forehead with a bleeding hand. The sight of the flowing red made him shudder involuntarily; then his teeth gritted together with something of ferocity.

"I wish it was Selina's," he snarled. "Damn her—she's made my life hell for me! But I'll pay her for her words

—I will, mark me! I'll get even; I'm not the man to put up with sneers and tempers without hitting back. I'd have done for her long since, but there's the risk—the risk. They'd hang me if I did for her; it 'ud soon be over, but there'd be the waiting for it, and the thought of the drop— No, I daren't do it—not yet. It's the risk that counts with me. They'd miss her—the folks about; not that there's so many of them, either, but still they'd miss her. And they'd start in to ask about her, and if I seemed afraid of them they'd hunt for her, and they'd find—they'd find—" What the neighbors might find so suggested itself to his slow moving brain that he shuddered, and once more his reddened hand went to his brow. He smeared the cold dew away with an oath, and left a crimson stain on the furrowed skin.

Once he tried to raise the half-rotted timbers that formed a small trapdoor; but he failed and stood back. One by one thoughts of the past flowed into his slow moving brain, the brain of a clod, as heavy and difficult of receptivity as the clayey soil itself. But if once an impression did settle there it was a permanency, there for all time. And the long slow months had crammed that one insistent desire for freedom into his brain and soul alike. The years that had passed since he first led home his wife, young, sharp-featured and thin-lipped, had served to breed a fierce hatred that was none the less deadly in that it was patient and slow. How he hated her! He would have given ten years of his life to see her lying dead at his feet, slain with his own hands, for to his mind

only he might kill her; but then—always was present the grim and terrible fear of the coward. There was no moral deterrent; he knew nothing of a heaven; he cared nothing for any particular hell the various undersized preachers held up to notice at the meeting house on intermittent Sundays. They were all different, those hells; they varied with the creed, but they did not appeal to him, for his wife had found religion, and could do but little save prate of that heaven which she and some score of select souls intended to inhabit exclusively when the last trump sounded. And he would have neither part nor lot in a heaven shared by her.

As slowly as the coagulating blood forced its way to the surface, stood out on the gnarled and dirty skin and dropped to the ground, so slowly moved his thoughts. No brilliant flashes of thought came to him as he waited there, but one slow moving idea, sluggish, half-formed, chaotic, gradually emanated from the nebula and stood out in ever more distinct outlines. The woman was accursed in that she had ruined his life; therefore—

"The accursed woman must die!" he snarled suddenly, baring yellow teeth and looking over his shoulder with a ghastly face, as if his words must have summoned a troop of avengers on the instant. The slow growth had come to its fruition almost; in effect, he was already a shedder of blood; only remained the opportunity.

Again he flung himself on the timber, searching with bruised fingers for a handhold beneath the edge. Once that was obtained, he wrenched until his back sinews creaked; still the boards remained immovable. Another pause for breath—it was as if some evil demon were playing this trick on him that his vengeful broodings might have freer play. He seated himself heavily on a fallen log; and buried his face in his hands, crushing his fingers over his eyes, for his distorted imagination was playing him grim tricks. The entire world seemed to have taken on

an indefinite reddish shade; the green of the trees was outlined in faint crimson; it was as if the blood he wished to shed were dyeing everything. Another strong shudder shook him; his mouth opened and shut vacantly; but that dominating thought refused to be ousted from his brain.

How he hated her! Twenty years of marriage had bred up a hatred such as mortal mind can scarcely conceive. A woman with a petulant, bitter tongue—a woman who marries only for the sake of escaping the degradation of spinsterhood and the dire pangs of starvation can make a man a demigod or a demon. Let her but display a certain gratitude, a sense of obligation for gifts conferred, and the position becomes tenable; let her take all things as a matter of course and seek for more, seek angrily, giving nothing in return, and the blackest hell may be light beside the heart of the man she has married. And Selina Hobhouse had destroyed his soul. Therefore, curse her—curse her over and over again! He pressed his hands closer to his eyes to shut out a vision of his wife's ill-tempered face, with the constant droop of the tigerish lips that spat forth venom from dawn to dusk. And the vision only impinged the more clearly on his brain; but as he stared with his mental eyes the face changed its expression slowly; the slightly prominent eyes became more prominent; the pallid skin flushed first, then grew dark; a fleck of froth appeared at the corner of the mouth, whose lips opened and shut like the mouth of a dying fish. Then the whole face became vacant; he opened his eyes, and saw before him only the tiny clearing and the bared boards at his feet. The sun was setting—it showed, a red, fierce ball, between two trees; and he laughed harshly at his fancy that all the world knew the color of his thoughts. Fool—to be frightened at a setting sun!

He did not shudder now, for his jaw had set into a hard square and his lips were tightly compressed into an evil line. In fancy he had murdered

her, and had found the work good; in practice—why not? Why not? Only the fear of consequences held him back from rushing hot foot to the cottage under the hill and dragging the life from her. Fear, that was the most dominating feature of his life. He had always been afraid of the dark, even as a child; now, as a man, he hated its silent possibilities. It might be peopled with strange and deadly shapes, that held out grasping hands to claw at him—he started upright with a low oath as soft fingers caressed his neck. Then he laughed grimly. Only the thin twigs of a low tree set in motion by the forerunner of the evening breeze! He defiantly stood erect and gazed all about him. The night would soon be on him with its shadows and fears; but—he had lived for close on fifty years, and nothing of harm had come to him out of the night. What was there to fear? He asked himself the question a dozen times, mumbling it through dry lips. What was there to fear? The night had no eyes to see the stains of blood, no eyes to watch the lifting of a board, no ears to hear the soft thud of a falling body. He had lived in the shadow of a fear for fifty years and naught had come of it; why fear now?

It was a strange battle fought there in the gathering dusk, the overcoming of a lifetime's custom. He deliberately waited, staring into vacancy, steeling himself to endure the elusive whispers of the rising wind, the harsh rattling of rotted boughs, the stealthy "sh-sh" of the waving grasses. Not until the night had fully come did he move; and then it was to fling himself once more on the boarding with a low laugh. He had fought down his fear and had conquered.

"I'll do it," he grunted, as he secured a firmer hold of the planking and lifted with all his strength. "They'll never know—they others. It doesn't concern them, nohow. They've never been partic'lar friendly nor neighborly, they haven't. Like as not they'd never notice she'd gone; but then again, they might." The trap came away

with a harsh, rending sound; he staggered back, gathered himself together again and crept forward. A foul scent emanated from the cavity laid bare, but he hardly heeded it, for curiosity overcame repugnance; he dropped on his knees and peered down. The darkness shut in what lay below with an impervious screen, but he had matches in his pockets; he sought about for a dry branch and kindled it deliberately; then, with curiosity still in the ascendant, he began his examination.

It seemed to go far down, very far down. Try as he would, he could not see the bottom; but a slow trickle told him that somewhere below ran a stream of some sort. So much the better—that would hide all traces. It was only a narrow pit, a well at one time, in all likelihood, filled over that venturesome children and newcomers might not be tempted to taste its waters—a thing forgotten by man, covered gradually from view by Mother Nature herself. He became aware of a glimmering of memory—the ancient name of the house where he had lived his life was Bitter Well; it might have taken its name from this very spot. Yes, that must be it; the well had been poisoned or fouled in some remote age; it had been covered—and now it was open again, offering a swift solution to all those bitter problems of the past.

Fear? What was there to fear? This providential discovery had slain the emotion. Once let him do his work, as he would do it, curse her, and all the world might seek for her in vain. This well would hide her from human sight evermore; one night's good work and the earth would hold its secret inviolable. He was skilled, in his own rude way, in the secrets of woodland and soil; he could make that place appear as if it had never been touched. And he would do it—yes, he would do it.

When?

The chill shudders shook him again as he stiffened with a thought. Why not now? He fought with the overpowering temptation, not for fear of

his meditated crime, but with fear lest that swift command that had burst into his startled brain should set the woodlands ringing with mocking echoes. He listened, but beyond the night noises there was nothing to be heard. Why not now?

Cooler reason came to him; a sudden disappearance might arouse comment. It must be done carefully; the way must be paved deliberately. How could that be done? Dully he tried to invent a path of retreat, but the one dominant thought would allow of no rival in his mind. First and foremost was the thought of murder; all other issues faded into nothingness by comparison. It would need time; and with this decision he laid the disturbed timbers back carefully, smoothed them down and spread the loosened soil in place. It was a place seldom if ever visited; the casual passer—there were few of them—generally took the winding path that led from the hill road to the ugly township below in the valley; it was only by accident that Hobhouse had found the spot. No need to fear intruders; but it were a foolish thing to betray his secret for want of a little care. In ten minutes the place, viewed casually, might never have been touched in years; and then he shouldered his axe and took the homeward path, moving slowly, ruminating heavily, until little by little all that had hitherto been dark became light, and rough places were smoothed completely. His face broadened into a cunning smile as he lifted the rude latch of the gate and strode into the house.

II

HE was met by a torrent of peevish abuse from a sallow-faced woman who, heated by much stooping over a hot stove, wasted no breath in friendly welcomes.

"I might starve and die for aught you cared, Emmanuel Hobhouse," she raved, splashing stew into unscoured dishes and dashing them on to an uncovered, unwashed table. The woman

was a sloven, unkempt, ugly. Though it was now night, she still wore the same sluttish garb she had donned with the dawn; curl pins marred her brow; streaks of black grease defaced her upper lip; her hands were grimy. Some latent delicacy in Hobhouse's constitution betrayed itself in a sneer of scorn, which was noticed at once and formed the text of another tirade.

"I can go slaving and starving and toiling and moiling till midnight for aught you care," she raved. "You go and loaf and laze, spending your time at the saloon, belike, whilst I, your wife, don't see a new face from week end to week end. May my God curse the day I ever set eyes on you!"

"You know what to do," he growled, hiding his face in a mug of strong, stewed tea. Somewhere within him something was boiling gently—some strong madness that might at any moment break its bonds.

"Do I know what to do, Emmanuel Hobhouse? Yes, I know what you mean. You want me to leave you—to go away for good. Catch me! You took me for good, and I'll stick here. I'm not going out into the world at my time of life to starve and scrimp so that you can get fat and lustful in idleness. You've taken me; you can keep me—so there you have it."

If she had seen the evil glance of red hatred that he shot up at her angry face from under half-raised lids she might have paused, but the sight was denied her.

"Never a soul passes in days," she stormed, as he went on stolidly with his meal. "No word have I spoken for a week, except to you; that drives me mad." His hands clenched tightly on knife and fork, but he did not lift his eyes again; he glued them to his plate and ate seriously, his thoughts keeping pace with the slow movements of his jaws. No words spoken for a week! Another week might go by before a living soul passed the cottage!

"A lot you care, fooling away your money on drink and tobacco—filthy stuff!" she raged, as he lumbered to his feet, took down pipe and plug and

shredded a pipeful of oily tobacco into his work-hardened palm. "Like as not you've been drinking tonight; that's what makes you so silent." He answered her nothing, but as he reached for matches a dog, a mongrel that his wife had befriended years before, ran between his legs and almost overturned him. With a low oath he aimed a heavy kick at the animal, and it fled yelping to the shelter of the woman's skimpy skirts.

"I'll do for that cur yet," he growled bitterly. She swung round and faced him, eyes blazing, form vibrant with hot passion.

"Yes, that 'ud be like you—you murderer! The only thing that cares for me in the world, and you'd kill it. You'd kill me if you weren't scared." The dog yelped in sympathy; and the woman found fresh abuse ready to her tongue as he seated himself again. Hobhouse bore it patiently, his mind fixed stolidly on the coming reckoning. He was thinking of his discovery of the afternoon; something that might have been the distorted embryo of a smile creased his lips.

"Laughing at me, are you? I'll teach you to laugh on the other side of your face, you—you—" She was scouring a pot, and her anger overcoming her, she flung it with all her force at the man in the chair. It struck him on the shoulder sharply; he shrank back with a little cry and that simmering something within him flashed into awful life. He spoke no word, but with one motion he reached the corner where he had placed his axe. What she saw in his face froze her speech; she ran to the door screaming inarticulately, tearing at the latch; but her nerveless hands refused to aid her. One glance she cast over her shoulder at the volcano she had roused; then the axe fell, its thud cutting off a scream midway.

He stole away from that which lay on the stone floor, listening to the fierce beats of his heart, shrinking, shrinking. That last choking yell seemed to be shouted from a hundred throats invisible in the air about him.

He cowered back against the chair he had left, the axe still clutched in his stiff hand, watching the stillness by the door. The lamp flickered; a shadow moved across the body of his wife; he felt a strange expectancy possess him. But the flame stilled again and the shadow settled quietly into its place. He thought she had stirred, and waited for what seemed like endless hours for some other evidence of life, but after the clock had ticked five solemn minutes into eternity he gathered himself together and crept across the flags.

She was quite dead. He had struck with all the concentrated anger and loathing of years behind the blow; and it had gone home surely. The nagging tongue was stilled forever; the harsh voice would never awake the echoes of the silent cottage again. As if against his own volition, he put out one hand and touched her, turned her face to the light. As soon as he released his hold the head fell back inertly. And so fear took him to itself and rocked him on angry tides of dread.

III

BUT the obsession was only temporary. His first thought was to flee the accursed spot and put leagues between himself and his crime. But he reasoned that his absence would arouse comment; inquiries would be made; discovery would ensue—and the arm of the law, even in that remote village in the hills, was long and deadly. The swinging noose seemed ever before his eyes, and the set white face of the condemning judge; the stir and hush of the jury as the sentence was pronounced seemed to sound in his ears. Long ago he had served on a jury when a murderer was sentenced to death—every little incident of that scene came back to him now, limned on his mind in fire.

He'd escape that, anyhow. He'd made his plans carefully; that providential well would solve the problem. He had resolutely kept his eyes away

from the corpse, stealing back to the stove, but now he eyed it thoughtfully, with the expression of one who wrestles with a problem. Something moved beside it; he started convulsively, and gave a little cry that changed into a howl of rage, as he noticed the dog he had kicked licking the dead woman's hands. He kicked the brute away, opened the door and flung it into the outer darkness, and then began his work.

There was much to be done. Not only must the actual evidence of his sin be removed from sight; all traces must also be destroyed, and the line of retreat laid open carefully. But first there was the disposal of the body. He set the door ajar, sought about until he found what he needed and bent beside the inanimate body for several seconds; then he rose staggeringly, a strong man bearing a burden. He swung the door to behind him, but a second thought came, and he once more entered the house; taking a lantern from a nail, he fastened it carefully to his belt, and then set forth on his expedition.

The trees whispered to him strange secrets; the rustling grass mocked at him, crying perpetually "Hush! Hush!" A dozen times and more elfin shadows played before him. His quickened fancy peopled the wastes with angry figures; every crackling leaf was the footstep of a spy; and yet he persisted, fear overmastered by a greater fear. So he came to the ancient well, and there he laid his burden down.

He worked without haste. His hands no longer trembled as he struck a match and lighted the lamp, shrouding the flame so that it shone anywhere save on that which he had carried toilfully. He felt no exultation at his completed work, neither did he feel remorse; he seemed to be curiously deadened to all feeling save that of fear, and one other feeling, which he could not attempt to understand. He seemed to be waiting—waiting for something undefinable and unknown. He would not have been astonished

had the dead woman suddenly broken into speech; nothing could surprise him so long as that strange, tense preparedness held possession of him. But he did not allow these feelings to hinder his work.

Methodically he stripped the trap of its covering of earth and dried sod; mechanically he tore open the timbers; then, with the chasm gaping before him and emitting foul odors, he paused for a searching gaze around. Nothing moved; even the grasses seemed to stand still to watch the consummation of that tragedy. His eyes roamed through a complete circle; of a sudden his heart leaped into his throat with an excruciating pain, and stood still there so that his breath was cut off short; the hair of his scalp lifted with a chill creeping below the skin. Two eyes stared at him from the thicket.

Before he could move or think disillusionment came. A mournful whimper smote through the stillness; with a sharp breath he gathered possession of himself and even laughed. It was only the dog, damn it! He picked up a stone and threw it with a sure aim; a yelp was followed by the sound of scurrying feet; then the darkness was unrelieved. But that greatest fear he had yet tasted hurried his actions. He lost no more time; lifting his burden, he flung it down the hole, slammed the trap down swiftly and threw back the earth and the turf. For hours he labored now, working carefully, with the cunning care of the man who has tasted terror. No single stone should be left unturned to hide the evidences of his crime.

Not far away grew great clusters of rank weeds; he dragged several such clusters up by the roots and replanted them over the trap. In that hot, humid air the vegetation would swiftly cover every trace of human handiwork; a week and the place would be as wild as an African jungle. Then he smoothed away the depressions in the grass where the body had lain, searchingly investigating every leaf, that no single spot of blood might remain in evidence, gathered up his tools, wiped

them carefully on rank grass that he trampled into the undergrowth, and so betook himself to the house he had left.

It seemed strangely quiet. The lamp still burned, but badly, for it needed trimming; it cast deceptive shadows everywhere, and he started back with a return of that swift fear, as a dull blackness moved weirdly behind the half-shut door. Then, with a biting curse, he took firm hold of his courage once more and began his sinister work.

There was not much to be done. The stuff on the smooth flags easily succumbed to the lavish applications of water; the cloths he used he burned in the stove; the axe, which still lay where he had flung it, he cleaned and polished to brightness. That all might be in order, he rolled down his shirt sleeves and examined the cotton below the elbow. There was not a single convicting stain; he made a further examination in view of the burden he had carried; nothing showed.

Then for the first time since the blow was struck, he smiled. The work was done; it was hidden; nothing remained save that dull fear and that duller expectancy of he knew not what. But there was really nothing to fear; no one could ever know the truth of that night's work. But since people might suspect—they *might* suspect—it was as well to do what had to be done as speedily as possible. He had reasoned the matter out in all its bearings; that flash of inspiration that had come to him on his homeward way lightened his brain. He would make all things safe finally; and when that was done he would rest, for he felt very tired.

"That'll fetch 'em," he said with a dry chuckle, as he took out paper and ink—cheap paper, cheaper ink. "If they see it in her own hand they can't suspect me. I'll cheat 'em. They can come and ask about for her"—he glanced over his shoulder at the shadow by the door—"and I'll tell 'em the tale. They won't believe it, but I'll show 'em the letter, and then—"

He sat down to the table, which still bore the remains of that last meal,

and cleared a space. Then, with a spluttering pen, he commenced his task. He spread out before him a letter he had received fifteen years before, a demand for money from his wife, and with painstaking, rustic care commenced to write, imitating the crabbed, unformed characters with marvelous fidelity.

"My dear Emmanuel," he began laboriously, "I am going away forever. I'm sick of it; and there's a man been asking me to go; so I'm going. We're going out West—I don't know where." He chuckled drily at that; it was a skillful touch. The vast West would swallow her completely; it would be impossible for any inquiry to be made.

With sprawling arms, hairy and bronzed, with lolling tongue and sweating brow, he toiled on.

"It's no use seeking me; I'll never come back. You'd better forget me as soon as you can. It was the loneliness that did it. I'm sorry for you, but I've to consider myself. That's all. So no more at present from your loving wife—"

He paused, every nerve and muscle in suspense. A stealthy tread had sounded outside the door; with cold chills creeping across his scalp and down his spine he waited breathlessly. He could not move; he could not think—the dead woman was returning to accuse him with her running blood!

A soft scraping at the door, a sound that grated harshly on his senses. He could stand it no longer. No matter what awaited him outside, he must go. But he was compelled to place both hands on the table and haul himself upright before his shaking legs would lift him from the chair. Inch by inch he crept across the floor, the scraping sound increasing as he neared the black shadow on the flagstones. Then, with a curious return of that strange expectancy, he lifted the latch and flung wide the door.

He staggered back as something crept in with a low whine. Then his face grew distorted with the wrath of the criminal at expected discovery.

It was only the dog again! It had returned to its home, and was whining and sniffing at the further end of the kitchen; before he could formulate a plan it had scented something that brought it rapidly to the corner by the door.

The dog might complicate matters. If it persisted in that uncanny sniffing and whining, what would the neighbors suspect? The dog must be done away with, then. It was not enough to drive it away with stones and curses; it must be removed completely, finally, without fear of its return. His eyes traveled to the axe; but he dared not set hand to haft now. Besides, more blood might be shed; and blood took a lot of cleansing away. No—he laughed grimly as he thought of a better way.

He searched about until he found a length of rope; in one end he fashioned a running noose. A short journey outside and he returned with a large stone. This he hitched securely into the free end of the cord, and with the means of execution complete he whistled the dog to his side.

It refused to obey; it eluded his pursuit; but eventually he felled it with a deftly thrown stool, and around its neck he flung the noose, which he tightened. Then, holding the scratching, snarling brute under one arm and the stone under the other, he passed out again into the night. It was not far he had to walk. It meant only a few minutes' journey; but part of it led him over the track by which he had returned, and he fancied—for after the shock of hearing the stealthy footsteps his nerve had deserted him—that the acrid odor of blood was everywhere. Still he went forward, the dog struggling hard for freedom, and gained the edge of a stagnant pool in the woods. The lessening darkness gave back the echoes of the splash. He waited a little while by the brink; nothing appeared; he turned and retraced his steps once more.

The first streaks of dawn illumined the eastern sky as he gained the cottage; and with a start he remembered that

what still remained to be done **must** be done quickly. The postman would pass the letter box at the end of the wood path within an hour, and he must run no chance of meeting him; he might notice things that he had striven to hide. He seized the pen that he had dropped in his fear, finished the letter hurriedly, sealed it in an envelope which he addressed to himself, wrote another note to a man he knew at a town a hundred miles away asking that the letter inclosed might be posted back to him unopened, placed envelope and covering note in another envelope, addressed it, and for the third time left the house. Not until the missive was in the letter box did he feel real security; but as the paper dropped among other papers he smiled relief.

Even yet there was much to be done. Every inch of the way along which he had carried his wife must be searched for evidences of the crime. But he had taken precautions; he had enveloped the body in sacking, and there were no traces to be seen. In the full light of day he stood at the edge of the clearing and looked upon the hidden grave. Even his fear-strengthened eyes failed to notice anything amiss with the place. A day would fully cover any flatness of the grass; a week and the place might be virgin woodland. He toiled back home, conscious of a growing weariness, and flung himself on the disordered bed with a sigh of relief. His eyes closed; his form relaxed; there, next to the room where he had murdered his life's companion, he slept soundly like a child. No dreams disturbed him; even on waking he felt no remorse, only a sense of relief, underlying which was that curious feeling of expectancy. He went to work on a distant field, toiling heavily, doggedly, his slow brain still working slowly. He had forgotten his fear; he said that no one could ever know the truth; he had been too cunning for them. Let them come and ask; let them have their suspicions; he was one too many for them. Two days later the postman brought him

his letter. He opened it as he disappeared within the house, but he dared not read it now; it had brought back remembrance of that chilling fear when the dog scratched at the door.

IV

HE was sitting at his supper that night when he heard voices in the distance; and once more fear, overpowering and terrible, took him in its grip. The meat in his mouth grew tasteless; the muscles of his throat contracted; he could not swallow. But he remained where he was, making no attempt to rise. They would pass the house, whoever they were, for not a soul had called beyond the postman since that night. He defiantly strove to dispose of the mouthful; but it was still unswallowed when the sound of feet was added to the sound of voices, and a single portentous knock thundered on the door. He tried to speak, but no words would come. What could it mean? It was dark; no one ever called when the day was done.

He dragged himself upright, stumbled to the door and flung it open. A dozen men stood there; many of them held lanterns; the lights gleamed on a couple of gun barrels.

"What d'ye want?" he said, masticating drily and trying against impossibility to swallow down his constricted throat.

"It's a sort of neighborly call, Emmanuel," said the spokesman, flashing his lamp in the murderer's face. "There's a sight of talk going on in the village down back, and we thought we'd just come up and ask you what's wrong."

It had come then! He realized subconsciously that now was the time to test the efficiency of his carefully thought out scheme. It was infallible; half a dozen words would explain everything; but there was no need to hasten matters. A strange coolness grew on him; the mouthful was swallowed with a gulp; he smiled even. The village policeman—it was he who had spoken first—spoke again.

"There's some says one thing and some says another, Emmanuel; I keeps an open mind."

"Come in, friends," said Hobhouse with forced ghastly heartiness. "Talk it over a glass, whatever it be. You look as serious as if there'd been rain for harvest."

They trooped in; and the alert senses of the man told him that they cast curious glances about the place. He did not notice that a draggled cur with a sodden rope about its neck had crept in at the heels of the last man, and was now sniffing in a corner of the room.

"I'll lay I know what's brought ye," he said with sickly mirth, reaching down thick tumblers from a shelf and placing them on the uncovered table.

"Before we goes any further," said the policeman, with sudden authority, "before we drinks your beer, let's have an understanding. We've come about your wife, Mrs. Hobhouse." Ah! It had come at last. This was the meaning of that curious expectancy that had companioned him for days. He had been waiting for just this moment. He had known subconsciously that there must be such a scene—had known from the moment the blow was struck. He could have chuckled outwardly as he chuckled inwardly, for it had come to him that his work had been just; and this preparation had been given him so that he might meet the moment firmly, without a single tremor. He would tell his tale, would show the letter in proof; they could not deny the evidence of their own eyes. But first he would tell them the tale; the letter must wait. In some dull fashion he had an idea of a situation; it would be an effectual one if, when suspicion was at its height, he produced the evidence and startled them all with proof of his innocence.

"My wife's gone," he said slowly. The face of the policeman became triumphant. Eye met eye; men whispered together under their breath.

"Yes, we know she's gone, Hobhouse." The policeman dropped the more familiar form of address.

"There's been people called at the house and couldn't get no answer. That's what set us a-talking. We know she's gone, but what we wants to know is: Where's she gone?" He paused imposingly, like a man who has clinched an argument by a single telling sentence.

"Ay, we want to know where she's gone," came a mutter from his rear. "Women don't go missing without just cause."

"She's left me," he said hardily. "Gone away with another man. I came back three nights ago to find her missing—she hadn't left a word."

There was an incredulous laugh from the rear of the party; but the constable turned with a frown.

"None o' that, Jim Buckhouse!" he said severely. "This is my affair first and foremost." Someone shuffled on thick boots.

"They reckoned it were strange, Hobhouse, coming here and knocking and getting no answer. So they began to talk. Mrs. Hobhouse didn't use to be away from the house often; it looked queer."

"Well, I've told you now," said Hobhouse; and again he felt a return of that strange expectancy. There was something still remaining; something hovered about him, some evil thing with outstretched claws ready to strike surely. But he defiantly set the menace at bay.

"She ran away—at her time o' life." He grinned ugly. "We'd had words—nothing serious; I come home at sunset—she wasn't here. I didn't say naught at the time, because I didn't know what to think. Then I got a letter"—he paused impressively—"a letter from her." He swelled inwardly with pride at his own acumen as an incredulous murmur came from the rear.

"Yes, from her," he repeated triumphantly. "In her own hand, posted from Mansfield—and that's a hundred miles away. It told me all there were to tell—too much. I didn't say naught because there's such a thing as shame. She's shamed me proper; she's a bad woman."

"Well, we're waiting, Hobhouse," said the policeman stolidly. The murderer eyed him thoughtfully.

"Waiting for what?"

"For a sight o' that letter. You've got to understand that there's suspicions about. Folks says—"

"What do they say?" He snapped it out curtly, a righteous man unjustly accused. He felt almost virtuous as he noticed some of the faces before him redden and then pale.

"They say you did away with her," came the policeman's voice. It seemed to come from an immense distance. "But a sight o' that there letter—that's all we wants." Hobhouse feigned anger.

"Me do away with her!" he cried. "Me? An honest, hard working man! I'd as soon think you'd done away with your missus, Mr. Whitely."

"Well, that's what they says, knowing there was bad blood between ye. And it's my business as an officer of the law to take a note o' sich-like rumors and take steps to clear up all mysteries whatsoever. Therefore and likewise, show us that there letter, so we can depart with easy minds."

"They accuse me of murdering her!" Hobhouse said slowly. "Well, I'll find out who did it, and I'll make him suffer, by God! An innocent man don't stand for that! Haven't I been injured enough by that woman to stand this extry? Gone away and left me, she did, same as any painted woman of the towns; and here there's folks comes and says I've done away with her. I'll show you."

He crossed the room and began to fumble in an ancient bureau that stood against the door leading to the sleeping room. The man who had muttered and sneered from the rear turned as an insistent tug came to his coat tails, and grasped his nearest companion by the arm.

"That dog's at its tricks again," he said. The dragged mongrel was tugging hungrily, drawing him toward the door.

"Let's see where he'll take us," said the second man; and the pair left the

place, not without hungry glances at the interior. They followed the dog's careful lead, their lanterns making the path all clear before their searching eyes.

"They're blamed intelligent," said the first man. "I've heerd of strange diskiveries from follering dorgs." After a swift run of nearly half a mile the animal stopped with a pitiful whine, sniffed eagerly and then began to claw at disturbed earth. Already a pit of some magnitude had been excavated by patient labor; inside a minute the brute's claws scraped on wood.

"This looks like business," observed one of the men, lowering his lantern. "It's her dog; belike he's found her. It wouldn't be uncommon."

"Get something and dig," grunted the other. They searched but found nothing. The dog, pausing in its task, lifted one forefoot and whined as they turned away. Then it grabbed the tail of one man's coat and dragged him forcibly back.

"Go you on; I'll stay here. Tell the rest; tell 'em to bring shovels." And while his companion was away he assisted the dog hungrily, scraping at the earth with toil-worn fingers, morbidly eager to discover the secret that lay hidden there.

Gray, the man who returned, found a defiant man fumbling with an envelope, while the eyes of the policeman bulged with expectancy. Hobhouse had thought, in his own slow way, that to rush to place the letter in his visitor's hands might breed suspicion; he had made a pretense of having forgotten its location, knowing all the while its exact position where he had laid it days ago.

"There's her letter," he said austere-ly. "There'll be a reckoning for these accusations. Posted at Mansfield, as ye'll see by the postmark. Addressed in her own hand—know it, any of ye?" He held the envelope before them with an air of conscious virtue; but always that strange expectancy gripped him fast.

"I'll read it myself," said the policeman, snatching at the envelope and withdrawing its contents. But as his

eyes ran down the ill written pages, just as he turned the leaf, the man Gray spoke, hoarsely, breathlessly.

"There's something wrong, mates, up in the wood. That there dog what's been nosing about everywhere—it's carr'ing on like a mad thing, scratching up what looks like a grave." All eyes turned toward him. "I've come for tools," he said finally. "You'd better come." The policeman swung about, and in his eye was a possessive look. His lips had tightened into a severe smile; the entire man seemed to swell with pride. Just as an inventor might stand on the discovery of an age's hidden secret, so the policeman stood, the open letter in his hand.

"Well, I'm agreeable," he said slowly. "Get spades, some of ye. You'd better come, too." He took a grip of Hobhouse's arm; the man flung him off with an oath.

"Don't try that game on here," he stammered. "I'm an innocent man. What's a half-mad dog to do with it? It's likely buried something and wants you to see it."

"P'raps someone else has buried something and don't want us to see it," said the constable. "Come on; come on, I say." Hobhouse fought for a moment against the possessive grasp on his arm; then he resigned himself to the inevitable, his brain searching for some explanation that might satisfy public curiosity. But already he seemed to understand that the game was up. He would lie and make excuse, because that was his nature; but how explain away what the opened well might reveal? A gleam of light shot through his bemused brain. The stream whose murmur he had heard might well have carried the corpse away; there would be no evidence; he could fling the unjust accusation in their faces, and stand out before them an innocent man. Did not the policeman hold in his hands sufficient evidence to drag him free from the impending charge?

"Come on, then," he muttered defiantly. "There's tools in the shed. I wish ye joy of all ye find."

Some of the men noticed that the policeman walked steadfastly beside the suspected man, and that his hand constantly sought the side pocket in his coat. But Hobhouse took no heed of this; the expectancy was lessening, and yet—was it? No; even now, trudging through the woodland, a fresh gust of tensed waiting for some inevitable blow took hold of him; his breath came hurriedly, as that of a man who has run a violent race.

They reached the clearing, and found the work almost done. The man who had remained behind was wiping profuse sweat from his forehead; the dog still whined melancholily at the edge of the trapdoor.

"Prise that door up," said the policeman, never leaving Hobhouse's side. They did it, a foul odor emanating from the gaping hole. They held lanterns downward; the rays flickered wanly on something below. As if drawn by invisible hands, Hobhouse went forward step by dragging step. Then his face whitened. Less than three feet from the surface hung a something—a mass of sodden drapery caught on a projecting timber. Fool that he was not to have seen to it that the body fell right down!

"That seems like her," said the policeman. "Get her out."

"It's a lie—it's not her!" raved Hobhouse, his white face twitching, his hands clawing at the air. "It's not Selina. She's run away and left me; you've seen her letter. How could she write it if—if—" He was foaming at the mouth, wild of eye, defiant. While men stood back from him as from a plague-infested place, he darted aside and snatched up a heavy bar that one had laid down.

"Don't none of ye touch me; don't dare!" he fumed. Three men busied themselves with what the pit contained—one broke away and was violently sick.

"Drop that!" The policeman's voice rang out commandingly; a bluish barrel showed dimly in the lamplight. The pistol muzzle covered Hobhouse fairly; two men threw themselves on him and dragged him down.

"It's a lie!" he stormed chokingly. "It's not Selina. If it is she's done it herself."

They had got the body out by this time. There were men who recognized the clothing; nothing else remained recognizable. "It's Mrs. Hobhouse, right enough," they said, shaking their heads.

"Prove it!" stormed the defiant murderer. "Prove it, I say! Because you've found a body, does it follow it's my wife's?"

"It looks like it," said the policeman drily. "Get him on his feet."

"She wrote me a letter to say she'd gone away," he said weakly, and the expectancy reached its height. He held his breath, waiting for the blow to fall. It must come; nothing could hold it back.

"Why did she sign *your* name to sich a letter?" demanded the policeman, tapping the note in his hand with the pistol muzzle. "It's written by her, is it? But it's signed 'Emmanuel Hobhouse.'" In one swift flash the man saw it all—the laborious writing, the sudden alarm as the dog scratched at the door, the need for haste. Instinctively he had signed his own name. Then the impending blow fell and he collapsed weakly.

"He'll hang, sure as fate," said the policeman. "Bring him along."



ETIQUETTE—A knack to entertain your friends with their opinions of themselves—contrary to those you entertain yourself.

"BUTTING IN" IN FRENCH

By ADELE LUEHRMANN

MONSIEUR TRARIEUX, of Paris (*very observing*)
Just arrived for a two weeks' exhaustive study of America. He understands no English.

MRS. VAN ETTEN, of New York (*willing to be observed*)
A boarding school knowledge of French, supplemented by shopping trips to Paris, has not quite eradicated her inborn belief that "everybody understands English."

PLACE: Mrs. Van Etten's drawing-room, New York City.

MRS. VAN ETTEN has just related to MONSIEUR TRARIEUX, that, while returning home from the Opera the night before, she and her husband had happened to witness the arrest of a small newsboy for some trivial offense. In spite of her husband's protests, she had stopped the carriage, and after much conversation with the policeman, the boy had been turned over to her and she had taken him to his home on the Bowery. MR. VAN ETTEN, it appears, though accustomed to such quixotic performances from his wife, does not enjoy them.

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*laughing*)
My husband calls me "Mrs. Buttski."

M. TRARIEUX (*with a deprecatory shrug*)
Pardonnez-moi, madame, mais—

MRS. VAN ETTEN
Oh, I beg your pardon. . . . *Pardonnez-moi, monsieur!* I always forget that you don't understand English. *Mon mari m'appelle "Madame Buttski."*

M. TRARIEUX
Madame Botti—

MRS. VAN ETTEN
Buttski—butting in, you know.

(M. TRARIEUX *stares blankly.*)

MRS. VAN ETTEN
Comprenez-vous pas? . . . It's slang. . . . Oh, if you are going to study this country, you must learn our slang. It

is one of our national characteristics. *C'est très nécessaire d'apprendre cela.*

M. TRARIEUX
Vraiment? Ah, madame, voulez-vous me l'expliquer, s'il vous plaît?

MRS. VAN ETTEN
Certainly, I'll explain. . . . *Certainement, monsieur; it means that I am . . . ce signifie que je suis—je suis . . . Oh, well, don't you see, I interfered when the officer was going to arrest the boy and took him home . . . Oh, I beg your pardon—pardonnez-moi, monsieur, but you know English does seem so much easier to understand than French. I'll say it over for you: J'ai pris le petit garçon de le gendarme et j'ai porté lui à sa maison.*

M. TRARIEUX (*with inspiration*)
Ah, c'est ça! Oui, oui, je comprends. La Madame Buttski est une philan-

throe célèbre, et votre mari vous fait compliment.

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*puzzled*)

A celebrated philanthropist? . . . Who—Madame Buttinski? Oh, no, no! There isn't any such person. . . . *Pas de personne, pas de personne!* . . . A philanthropist? (*Laughing gaily.*) Oh, *pardonnez-moi*, but do you know, that is really very funny! . . . *C'est à rire.* . . . When I have explained exactly what "butting in" means, you'll laugh, too. You see, it means a person who is always interfering in other people's affairs. Now I'll say that in French for you, since you prefer it. . . . *C'est une personne qui est toujours intéressante dans les affaires des autres. Comprenez-vous?*

M. TRARIEUX (*happily*)

Oh, oui, oui, madame—c'est très simple. Ce signifie une personne d'un bon cœur, n'est-ce pas?

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*doubtfully*)

A person with a good heart—well, no—not exactly . . . *pas exactement.* . . . Of course, Monsieur Trarieux, French is a lovely language for quotations and the Opera, but I do think it is a pity you don't use English for conversation; it's so much simpler.

(M. TRARIEUX *gestures hopelessly.*)

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*desperately*)

Monsieur, what is . . . *qu'est-ce que c'est a goat en français?*

M. TRARIEUX

Gaule?

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Yes, a little animal that has— Oh, dear! . . . *Un petit animal qui a . . . what's horns?* Oh, wait . . . look, monsieur . . . *regardez.*

(*She places her thumbs on her temples and crooks her hands to represent horns.*)

M. TRARIEUX

Ah—cornes, peut-être?

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Of course! I remember now thinking how funny it was that horns were corns.

M. TRARIEUX

Bien! Alors, madame—le petit animal qui a des cornes? Vous voulez dire peut-être—un cheureau?

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*vaguely*)

Cheureau? . . . Yes, I suppose so . . . if it means a goat . . . Well, my husband says that I am . . . *pardonnez . . . mon mari dit que je suis . . . what was it you called it?—un cheureau.*

M. TRARIEUX (*half rising*)

Madame!

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Oh, no, no! He doesn't say I am a goat; he says I am like one . . . *comme un.*

M. TRARIEUX

Comme un cheureau! Ah, madame, c'est impossible!

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Oh, dear, what am I saying? I am getting all mixed up. . . . Don't you see? Not that I am like one, but that I act like one . . . *je fais comme un cheureau.*

M. TRARIEUX (*with the calmness of despair*)

Madame, je ne comprends pas du tout.

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Oh, don't you see? A *cheureau* butts. Well, *je suis comme un cheureau—je butt.*

M. TRARIEUX

Bot?

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Yes . . . *oui, oui . . . like this . . . un cheureau fait comme ça* (*She bobs her head violently several times.*) *Comme ça, comme ça!*

M. TRARIEUX (*appearing to have a glimmer of light; he nods, laughing*)
Oui, oui, le cheureau.

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*relieved*)

Ah, now you understand! It's slang, you see—that's why it was so hard to explain it. But you must learn it if you want to understand America. . . . *C'est très nécessaire de l'apprendre en Amérique.*

M. TRARIEUX (*in consternation; he has understood nothing since the pantomime of butting*)

Ah, non, madame!

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Oui, oui . . . in America everybody uses it . . . *en Amérique, tout le monde. C'est—c'est—la mode.*

M. TRARIEUX (*apprehensively*)

Tout le monde? Vous voulez dire que c'est une coutume du pays?

MRS. VAN ETTEN (*nodding emphatically*)

Oui, oui . . . it is a custom of the country.

M. TRARIEUX (*almost speechless with amazement*)

Pour les dames? Pour les dames du grand monde?

MRS. VAN ETTEN

For society women? Oh, dear me, yes. Don't they in Paris? How

funny! Well, perhaps you don't need it in France; maybe people mind their own business and there isn't any "butting in."

M. TRARIEUX

"Bottin een"—c'est très curieux.

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Does it seem so queer to you? (*With coy mockery.*) Well, perhaps over there the women obey their husbands and never "butt in" . . . *peut-être, les dames ne "butt in" pas à Paris.*

M. TRARIEUX (*lifting thankful eyes to heaven*)

Ah, non, madame, Dieu merci!

MRS. VAN ETTEN

Well, you must come to see me often, and I'll explain more of our slang to you. I really feel that you have made a very good beginning.



GIPSY BLOOD

By RUTH HAMMITT KAUFFMAN

THE wanderlust has called me, and I must run away—
 Forget, on wind-swept, dew-drenched downs,
 The streets of dirty, jostling towns,
 The artificial greens and browns,
 The nights that mimic day!

My nomad blood gives answer to all the airs of spring,
 And bids me heed the ancient goad,
 And, guided by my fathers' code,
 Tread through the dawn the Open Road,
 Untrammelled, gipsying.

The race call orders "Forward!" Nor shall my lips be dumb!
 I go to trail the hill and plain,
 To drink great draughts of joy and pain
 In burning sun and cold, gray rain—
 I ask once, but not again:
My comrades, will you come?

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LÉANDRE

By HELEN WOLJESKA

DO not concern yourself about the loves that came to him before, nor those that must come after—only about this present love, and that it be unique in its charm.

Remember—you can never be more than an episode in your beloved one's life. But you can be the most adorable episode—that leaves a perfume as of summer roses, and a gleam as of iridescent elfin wings, and an echo as the tremor of a golden harp in the memory of the beloved.

For woman, love is a tragedy. For man, it is a short story.

Happiness is not the atmosphere for the development of greatness. Oh, dear one, let me be very small!

Passion is a wild mountain path. The wise woman will stay on the dusty highway of conventionalities.



CLOSED PORTALS

By CLARE GIFFIN

AT Heaven's gate they stand and sigh,
But may not enter in—
The haggard souls of those who die
With unrepented sin.

At my heart's door they stand and wait,
But no voice bids them come—
The flame bright Loves that came too late;
Within, my heart lies dumb.



SHE—Have you ever read "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea"?
HE—No; it is too deep for me.

JEANETTE*

By FREDERICK C. PATTERSON

CHARACTERS

FLORENT (*a French Canadian*)
MATT LARSON (*a young trapper*)
JEANETTE (*Florent's wife*)

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *Northwestern Manitoba.*

SCENE—*The interior of Florent's cabin. It is neatly though plainly furnished. There is an outer door at the center, a window at the left and a kitchen dresser between the door and the window. A plain deal table stands between the door at the right and the back, snug against the wall. A larger table stands at the left, with a chair on either side, and a cot near by. There is a stove near the cot, a chair up stage, near the small table, a Winchester rifle standing in corner near the stove and a kitchen lamp on the small table.*

JEANETTE is discovered seated at the table at the right, reading, her head on her hands. Through the window is seen a midwinter landscape flooded with moonlight, very quiet and peaceful. As JEANETTE turns a leaf of the book she sighs deeply and lets her head fall forward on her arms. She remains motionless in this position till away in the distance comes a sound of sleigh bells. She raises her head quickly a few inches from the table, then slowly upright, listening, but with no alarm. The bells come nearer and nearer; then a puzzled expression, followed by one of expectancy, comes into her face. She rises, goes to the door and stands with her hand on the latch.

JEANETTE

Matt! Oh, I hope not!

(*She opens the door as the bells cease a little way from the house. Standing in the moonlight, she listens and there comes the peculiar call of the white owl, which JEANETTE replies to in the same way. Then she returns into the house and glances anxiously at the clock on the dresser. Enter MATT LARSON, dressed in a fringed buckskin coat, fur cap and*

moccasins. He kicks the snow off his arctic socks as he enters.)

JEANETTE (*closing the door*)

Didn't you get my message, Matt? I said not till Wednesday—that's to-morrow.

MATT (*taking her in his arms*)

I know it—but Dixon, at the half-way house, is the only man who has a cutter around here, and he wants it to

*Acting rights reserved by the author.

go south in tomorrow, so I had to take my chance.

JEANETTE

But I can't go with you, Matt—I told you so. Oh, you know what I said! If Florent fails to put that deal through and get the money, I can't go—I can't—I can't!

MATT

But you said in the message that he had it.

JEANETTE

Well, I think it's *almost* sure.

MATT

Then, you've got to come.

JEANETTE

No—no, I tell you I can't! Oh, don't make it harder for me, dear! I've told you I love you, and I do—but I said also that I would never leave Florent while he was poor. He *has* treated me badly, and—

MATT

He has treated you like a dog, damn him! And all he wants you for now is to work for him. He don't care for anything but putting through some crooked land deals he's after, and if this last big fake pans out he'll treat you worse than ever.

JEANETTE

He was kind to me once—

MATT (*angrily*)

Say, what did you send for me for?

JEANETTE

Oh, Matt, don't! You've never seem to understand how I feel in this—

MATT (*half sneering*)

It's all right as long as you know yourself.

JEANETTE (*going to him*)

Dear, I want to come with you—and I will, if Florent only gets this money. (*She crosses back to the table at the left, sits down and rests her face in her hands.*) I'm tired—so tired—and I want you to love me and let me love you—very quietly—for a long time.

MATT

There, girl, I get hot sometimes because you look at things in such a queer

way—but, you see, I've been asking you to come away with me for nigh on a year now. All you have to do is to jump into the cutter at the foot of the bridge, and we'll be in Redville by morning and then on to the Calgary trail before that Canuck fox knows he's alive.

JEANETTE

But wait—

MATT

Think, he don't even know I come around here now, so he won't know which way to turn to look for you.

JEANETTE

It isn't that—it isn't that! I'm not afraid. It's just— Oh, I've told you! He married me when I was half starved—my mother was dead and my father had deserted me. He probably saved my life—and even though I almost hate him, I can't leave him while he's hard up. Don't ask me again, Matt. Be patient with me till I can send you another message. If you come back to me then, I will let you take me away—anywhere—where we can care for one another and be happy. Now go, dear, won't you? Florent may be back tonight, for all I know, and he would kill you if he thought you loved me.

MATT

Well, I *do* love you—do you hear? I love you, and I'm not going to wait any longer. Here, kiss me—kiss me, I say! (*Carried away, she puts her arms around his neck and kisses him just as a man's figure appears at the window. The figure starts, stands a moment and disappears at the right, as JEANETTE sinks into a chair at the large table.*) Now I'm going; will you come?

JEANETTE

Oh, yes, I will come with you, but dear, listen to me; not tonight.

(MATT makes an impatient movement.)

I love you so that I *must* come to you, but I am not a bad woman—only a desperate one; I am driven to leave my husband because he does not love me, but if I knew he had money and doesn't need me at all, I could come with you

and be happy—for you are all there is in life for me now, Matt.

MATT

I suppose it isn't that you want to know whether he has struck enough cash to make it worth your while to stick to him—how's that?

JEANETTE (*running to him*)

Oh, Matt, how can you—you don't think that! You know that's not true. Don't look at me like that. Oh, God, if only— (*Weakening.*)

MATT

Sh! Hark! (*There is a sound of sleigh bells, as though shaken by a frightened horse.*) It's the horse; something's frightened him—wolves. Wait till I see. Got a gun?

(*JEANETTE runs to a drawer in the dresser and takes out a revolver.*)

JEANETTE

Take this; it's the one you gave me. (*MATT goes out, closing the door behind him. As he disappears, the door at the right opens quickly and FLORENT enters, making threatening gestures at JEANETTE to insure silence.*)

FLORENT

Tais-toi! I haf seen from the window. You love him—he come back. Not a word. You keep him—gif him something to eat—ts-ss-ss-ss—or I keel you both!

(*FLORENT disappears into the room as MATT re-enters, after looking carefully along the trail. JEANETTE is standing like one transfixed and does not move as MATT speaks.*)

MATT

I guess a wolf frightened the beast. He's still now, but I must go. Here's your gun. (*He lays it on the table against the wall.*) Once for all—will you come? Why, what's the matter?

JEANETTE

Nothing. You must have something to eat before you start back. I'll get you something. (*She takes bread and wine from a cupboard under dresser.*)

Sit down there. (*She gives a sudden start.*)

MATT

What's wrong with you?

(*The door opens slowly and FLORENT appears. He comes in very quietly, but speaks without a trace of feeling.*)

FLORENT

Good evening.

MATT (*recovering himself*)

Hello, Florent, how are you? Dropped in as I was passing; been up North Creek looking for beaver.

FLORENT

It is a good year for ze beaver. Hah, ma Jeanette mak you at home, eh? Good; I am hungry myself. (*While talking, FLORENT has thrown off his coat onto a chair standing between the window and the door; he now comes down and seats himself at table. To MATT, who has risen.*) Sit down. Jeanette, the cognac. You mak money from the beavers, m'sieu? It ees a good thing to haf money, eh?

MATT (*uneasily*)

Yes, it's a good thing to have money if you want it as bad as I do.

FLORENT

Aha, ze girl will not wait—M'sieu Larson ees in love? Zat ees good, too.

MATT (*taking a drink of brandy*)

Ha, ha! The girl won't wait—that's good! You're dead right. I want money and a girl, and the girl won't have me till she's sure of the money—ha, ha, ha!

(*FLORENT joins in the laugh uproariously, but with narrowed eyes fixed on MATT.*)

FLORENT

Hah, it ees a good joke, zees love business—I know well! We will drink to it, *mon ami*—come! (*He pours out brandy for both. Meanwhile JEANETTE is watching both wonderingly and anxiously.*) To love! (*Grimacing maliciously.*) To our girls and our wives, eh, m'sieu? And my Jeanette shall drink with us (*turning to JEANETTE*) and then go to bed. I prefer M'sieu Lar-

son's company alone. (MATT glances quickly at JEANETTE and back to FLORENT. JEANETTE comes forward and takes the cup nervously from FLORENT, who throws her a threatening glance.) Love, m'sieu! (They all drink and FLORENT sets his cup down with a click.)

FLORENT

Now to bed, Madame Florent.

(He gets up and crosses to the chair on which he has deposited his coat and feels in the pockets. JEANETTE crosses to the door at the right and in passing bends down and whispers.)

JEANETTE

Take care! (Goes out.)

FLORENT (catching the words, grinning, then turning back to the table with some cigars in his hands)

We will talk, *mon ami*. (He sits at the table and lights a cigar after passing one to MATT.)

MATT

Sorry, I can't. I've got a blanket on my horse out there, but he's been standing for a long time already. (He rises and stretches, but watches FLORENT.) I must get along.

FLORENT

Seet down—finish your smoke; I haf business to talk perhaps.

MATT

Well, then ten minutes. (He seats himself.) Go ahead.

(FLORENT rises and walks across the room and back again to the table. His movements like those of an angry jackal. He leans over the table and snarls into MATT's face.)

FLORENT

You mak love to my wife—I keel you!

MATT (taken by surprise and with an uneasy smile)

You damn fool!

FLORENT (drawing back slowly, his teeth showing)

Am I damn fool?

(He suddenly whips out a knife and starts around back of the table. MATT

springs up, his own knife shining in his hands, and the two men stand looking into each other's eyes. After quite a pause FLORENT turns away with a nasty laugh, and replacing the knife in his belt, takes up another cigar from the table and lights it. MATT stands on the alert, after one quick look at the door. FLORENT sits again in the chair at the right of the table and pouring out some brandy, hands it to MATT.)

FLORENT (suddenly)

I will sell her to you: what will you gif?

MATT

You're mad, you fool!

FLORENT

Not as mad as you, *mon ami*. You think to mak love to my wife and I say nothing! Hah! You want her. (Shrugging.) I offer her to you; what will you gif?

MATT (leaning over the table and speaking low and both embarrassed and angry)

When I want her, damn you, I'll take her—and you look out you aren't around when I come for her, see?

FLORENT (half closing his eyes)

He, ha! You are funny—you joke with me!

MATT (sneering)

Yes, we've both been joking, haven't we? Now I'm going, unless you've anything else to say.

FLORENT

Non. I let you go now—'cause I see you again soon, perhaps.

MATT (at the open door)

Oh, go to the devil! (He goes out, closing the door.)

FLORENT

Non—but I send you there.

(He runs to the corner and snatches up the rifle, then goes back to the door, opens it a trifle, drops on one knee and levels the gun through the aperture. Meanwhile JEANETTE has entered from the other room in time to see the door close on MATT and to see FLORENT's quick action. Realizing in an instant his intention, she

snatches up the pistol lying on the table close to her and fires point blank at her husband. FLORENT falls backward, his rifle going off simultaneously. JEANETTE stands rooted to the ground as MATT rushes in, his knife in his hand. He looks at the body of FLORENT and then to JEANETTE, who seizes him by the arm and drags him off to the right.)

JEANETTE (*gasping*)

Matt, he was going to kill you, and I shot him! Go to him—quick!

MATT (*crossing to FLORENT and kneeling by his side examining the wound*)

The bullet grazed his head, that's all. He'll pull through all right as soon as he comes to. Here, help me get him on there. (*He nods toward the left, and together they place the unconscious man on the cot.*) Now give me some of that brandy and a handkerchief. I'll see to him while you go and get your things on. You'll have to come now. When we get to Redville, we'll send someone over to look after him. He'll be all over it in a few hours. Hurry now—

JEANETTE

You're sure he's not badly hurt? Let me look! Oh, Matt, I might have killed him. Thank God, I didn't! I'll come now.

(*She goes into the inner room and returns at once with her coat and shawl, which MATT helps her to put on. Then she goes to the outer door, opens it and holds out her hand to MATT. The latter starts toward her, taking a last look around the room. He sees FLORENT's coat lying across the chair by the door and quickly crosses to it as though a sudden thought has struck him. He feels the pockets and pulls out a leather bag.*)

JEANETTE

What's that?

MATT

The money. We aren't going to lose on this deal.

JEANETTE (*almost stupidly*)

What do you mean? That is the money I told you about. You are going to take it? Why, Matt, don't you know

that's what I've been waiting for—and why I didn't come to you before? Oh, you didn't mean that—you couldn't really take it, could you?

MATT

Oh, stop it! D'you think I'm going to be a fool just because you've got some spot in your head? We need this money, and we've got as much right to it as he has.

JEANETTE

Oh, Matt—Matt, what do you mean?

MATT

Well, he tried to kill me, and offered to sell you if I wanted you. Anyhow, he probably stole it.

JEANETTE (*dully*)

I don't understand. You're going to take that money away from him, and—I've hurt—I've shot him.

MATT

Don't be a little fool! We'll leave him some—as much as he deserves. What are you doing? (*JEANETTE has begun to take off her wraps.*) Here! (*fiercely*) keep your things on. Come along. What's the matter with you?

JEANETTE (*very quietly*)

I'm not going, that's all.

MATT (*fiercely*)

What do you mean?

JEANETTE (*bitterly*)

I'm going to stay here—here in this place, and—work for—my husband—I suppose.

MATT (*with suppressed fury, leaping forward and catching her wrist*)

Are you mad—or do you know what you're saying?

JEANETTE (*suddenly whirling and looking full into his face*)

Yes, I know what I'm doing—now. I'm choosing between two thieves. I happen to be married to one, so I'm saying good-bye to the other.

MATT (*half raising his right hand*)
Damn you for that!

JEANETTE (*pointing to the door but not
looking at MATT*)

Go!

MATT (*dashing the money furiously to
the floor*)

Then stay and be—

JEANETTE

Sh! Go!

(MATT at the door gives a sneering laugh, and shrugging his shoulders flings out of the door. Almost at once comes the sound of sleigh bells jingling furiously, then dropping to the regular, quick movement of a rapidly driven horse. JEANETTE stands with head raised and mouth set, listening to the retreating sound; her eyes are closed and her attitude one of supreme loneliness as the bells die away.)

CURTAIN.



TO ARCADY

By CORA A. MATSON DOLSON

O LITTLE road of yester's hope,
How fair your windings were to see
Along the fresh green sunlit slope—
You seemed to lead to Arcady!

O little road, I deemed you fair,
Nor thought could any pitfalls wait;
"To Arcady," I sang, "is where
I go to find its rose-wreathed gate!"

O little road, when down the land
I sought your way with one by me,
I found fresh roses to my hand
As sweet as grow in Arcady!

O little road, whate'er betide,
And wheresoe'er your ending be,
I know it is who walks beside
That makes you lead to Arcady!



EVERYONE can read the signposts on the road to perdition except the man who is traveling along it.



A WOMAN who pretends to laugh at love is like the child who sings at night because he is afraid.

JIMMY'S SACRIFICE

By THOMAS F. LOGAN

VICE and virtue exerted alternate fascination for Jimmy Brooks, according to the guise in which they came to him. Vice was in the ascendant just now, but it was such glorious, idyllic, blissful vice that Jimmy called it virtue and embraced it ecstatically.

Downstairs he could hear the laughter and chatter of some of his sister's friends. His father, he knew, was in the library—alone and smoking. What simple souls they were, the whole lot of them! What did they know of life, in its pulsating, gripping, mad fury? Life and love! Love and life! Ah, what words to conjure with! They made even Jimmy's burden of twenty-four years sit more gently on his blond head.

Tonight he would see her—see her in all her radiant beauty, with her eyes like wet violets, her rosebud lips of dew, her milk-white shoulders, her voice of music—all, all one glowing ecstasy. What mattered it that she was married? What mattered it that her husband was a power in Congress? What did anything matter but love?

Besides, the beast did not understand the glorious creature he had for wife. He did not understand her ideals or her aspirations. He did not try to make her life his life, his life her life. And even if he had, what kind of joint life would it have been? Sordid, mean, miserable, tainted with bribe money, with venality, with political and corporate corruption.

And Jimmy was going to save her from that life of shame. Save her, thank God, and carry her away to

Olympia. Dear old Olympia! How happy they would be wandering around there! Jimmy did not know exactly what time the trains left for Olympia, but he was sure they would be on time.

He gave a final tug at his dress tie, looked himself over approvingly in the long glass and went down the stairs very seriously.

"That you, Jimmy?" called his father.

"Yes, sir."

"What have you got on for this evening?"

Jimmy hesitated. "An engagement at the club, sir," he finally answered. "Did you want me for anything particularly."

"No; just thought we might run in to see one of the shows," replied the elder Brooks.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Jimmy. And he really was. He quite liked his father—there was something very chummy about the old man. He wondered if it would break him all up when the blow-out came. He supposed so. It would be a terrible blow to him. And there was his mother, too. And his sister. Jimmy wondered if William Alden, who had been calling on her for some time, would throw up the job when he learned of Jimmy's scandal.

They called to him from the drawing-room as he was going out—Elizabeth, William and half a dozen others. He couldn't help feeling that he was above their caperings and chatter. His was the problem of life and love, the problem that threatened two homes, his own and Hers—and yet he did not

pause nor doubt. The road was clear before him. He knew his way.

II

JIMMY's taxicab stopped in front of a great stone house on Massachusetts Avenue. The soft lights that shed their rays from the hallway symbolized subdued elegance. He ran up the steps familiarly, touched the button and was admitted by the butler. "Mrs. Winston is in the music room," said the man. "She said you were to go right up."

"Jimmy, Jimmy!" said the vision that came out of the darkness of the far end of the music room, like some gossamer girl from an enchanted forest. "Jimmy, Jimmy!" she cried hysterically. "Thank God, you've come—you've come!"

"Of course, I've come," said Jimmy soothingly. He took her in his arms and held her close. "What is it, dear? You seem *distracte*. Has anything happened?"

"Everything. It is all over—and for you and me, it's now or never."

"Let's start at the beginning, sweetheart," said Jimmy calmly. "Tell me all about it."

"Well, you know what you told me about the corruption gathering about my—Hilton's—career? As you know, he has never talked much about his plans since the first week of our marriage—that day when he came home and pulled piles of bills from all his pockets, dropping them on the table with a smile and asking me to count them. There was no less than \$5,700 in the pile—in bills of all sizes. I looked up at him and asked him simply: 'Did you get this money honestly?' He grew white with rage. 'I made that money in the honest practice of the law,' he said, 'and it comes with poor grace from my own wife to question me with such an implication.' He said no more. Never again did he mention his practice. When he was sent to the State Senate I knew that he was campaigning, but that was all.

Then, as you know, he was nominated for Congress, and we came here."

"Yes, yes," acquiesced Jimmy impatiently, "I know."

"Well, during all this time," Mrs. Winston went on with suppressed emotion, "he has given me a regular allowance of one hundred dollars a week, besides paying all the household bills and current expenses. He has never asked me when, how or for what I have spent my money. And his manner has been a continuous warning not to try to pry into his financial affairs."

"I have told you just how he was making all his money," Jimmy cut in. "I have explained that Montana land deal, and how his part of the loot in that deal alone was no less than \$194,000."

"Why should he get—"

"As I have explained to you before," Jimmy interrupted, "he introduced a bill throwing open lands to certain public corporations. They were very valuable lands, and the corporations paid him \$194,000. Everybody in Washington knows that something was wrong, but nobody can fix the blame on him. I have been told that all through his political career he has refused to accept any money in cheque form, until he has become known as 'Hard Cash' Winston. But what is this crisis you spoke about?"

"Well," said Mrs. Winston tensely, "I spoke to him last night about some gowns I had ordered—"

Jimmy frowned at this evidence of his loved one's reliance on another man for support. It was the one irritating feature of his glorious love for Mrs. Winston.

"He didn't pay any attention at first," Mrs. Winston went on, "and I repeated my remark. Then he suddenly cried out: 'My God, woman, can't you attend to these things yourself? I have troubles of my own.'"

"I had never seen him so irritable, and so I asked him if something important was troubling him."

"Oh, absolutely nothing but the latest styles in hats," he said sar-

castically. 'You didn't think it was any real trouble, like a scandal or a jail sentence, did you?' Then he burst out again: 'If you are so anxious to know, I might as well tell you that that is just what it is—a jail sentence. They've got me cornered. I've been driven into a blind alley. They are threatening an investigation of the whole Western land subject, and if the opposition gets control they will drag me into it feet first.'"

"Now," said Jimmy with excitement, "you know what he is. You know what a scoundrel he is, what he has brought you to. A man absolutely without morals or a sense of right or wrong. Yes, this is the finish, and for you and me it is, as you say, now or never."

"What about your mother and father, boy?" said Mrs. Winston, for the first time really thoughtful. "When they learn that we have gone away together, it will break them up."

"Never you mind about them," admonished young Brooks. "That is my part of the responsibility. You are not becoming frightened yourself, are you?"

"I was thinking only of you."

"Well, you needn't be afraid for me; I have five hundred dollars in the bank, and that will keep us until I get some sort of position. I am not rushing into this thing blindly, dear heart. I know the responsibility I am taking on. I know that it may be a month or so before I am able to support you properly. But, as you know, I have written several stories for the magazines, and should have no trouble in connecting with one of them permanently. It will be a battle at first, but you will be brave, won't you, dear?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Winston, with a courage born of a good dinner and being in a luxurious, warm room. "I have fully considered everything. I can live this loveless life no longer. I want to be free. I want love. You, Jimmy, are the only one who has ever understood me. You have looked on me, not merely as a household utensil, but as a chum, a comrade—"

"That's true," agreed Jimmy, "and besides, there is the higher thought of the freedom it will bring us both. Freedom—think of it, sweetheart—freedom to our souls and our minds! We will live a higher, better life—a life of love and usefulness. What has Winston ever been to you? What could such a man be to any woman, with his selfishness, fattening on the weaknesses of other men, growing rich out of corruption—"

"We are not really doing him a wrong, are we Jimmy?" asked the woman doubtfully.

"Wrong!" exclaimed the boy. "He is but reaping the whirlwind. He has never given you love nor understanding. Such a marriage is immoral. Love alone makes union right."

"I suppose I should have known when I married."

"What difference does that make?" argued Jimmy. "How can we promise to feel ten years from now as we feel today? Such marriage vows are foolish."

"But you will not change, will you, dear?" asked Mrs. Winston.

"That is different," vowed Jimmy. "We are mates, ordained as such by God."

"And you will always love me?"

"With every pulse beat, every thought, every act of my life! I live for you, dear! You are all I have in the world—all, all, all! You are my blood, my heart, my soul! It is killing me to think of you in this atmosphere where the very air you breathe is tainted with Winston's corruption. The very money you spend is blood money, wrung from poor wretches who trusted Winston and elected him to office. How it must sicken you!"

"Yes, it's horrible. And now he is bringing down disaster by being caught. I suppose it will get into the papers and raise a dreadful scandal, won't it?"

"What difference does it make? We shall be far away. When will you be ready to go?"

"I don't know."

"But we must decide quickly. This is the time—now or never. Can you be ready by tomorrow night?"

"I suppose so. And you will always love me, Jimmy, no matter what happens—no matter how old I grow? Suppose my hair should turn gray and wrinkles should come to my face?"

"There, there, dear; I love you for what you are, not for externals. Now will you be ready tomorrow night?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Winston with quickened determination. "Let it be tomorrow night. We can go to New York."

"I will have a cab at the corner at eleven o'clock tomorrow night," decided the boy. "You can take a suit case and slip out quietly, and I'll be waiting for you. You need not—What was that?"

"Winston," said the woman. "Don't leave; that would look strange. Just stay and act naturally."

The boy seemed rather wilted as Winston came in, looking abstracted.

"Oh, hello!" he said. "How are you, Brooks? Glad to see you. Hello, dear! I'm glad you've not been lonesome. I hurried home, fearing that you might be. You won't mind if I get to work again? I have a lot of papers to go over."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Winston. "Jimmy was just leaving, though."

"Yes," declared Jimmy, "I was just going. Good night, Mrs. Winston. Good night, Mr. Winston."

"At eleven," whispered the wife, as Jimmy went away.

III

MRS. WINSTON was a romantic soul, quite above sordidness. She hated money—so she spent every cent that her husband gave her. She was not an unreasonable woman. She did not object to Winston amusing himself by working fourteen out of his sixteen waking hours, as long as he gave himself proper recreation by taking her to the Opera and theater. She was not one of those women who constantly complain. As long as her husband supplied her with all the hats and gowns she wanted, she was fairly content.

But back in her heart, snugly sheltered from prying eyes, she nursed a longing to be "understood."

Oh, what joy to be "understood"! What agony to live without that necessary commodity in a woman's life! Oh, to meet a man who was full of understanding!

And then Jimmy came. Young and blond, he yet seemed fairly to ooze understanding. She had met him at a dance. He had bowed low and looked into her eyes. There it was, staring at her—understanding! It was shining out of his eyes, bristling from his hair, sprouting from him. The young man was fairly seeped in it. When he moved about the room, gently pressing Mrs. Winston's arm, understanding sprayed all round him.

Ah, if Jimmy had had such a wife, he would have known how to appreciate her! These politicians! How cold and self-centered they were! Their life was the only life, their interests the only interests. What matter it to them that their wives remained at home and pined? What mattered it if in their wantonness, they dragged the woman into the maelstrom with them?

Of course, Jimmy did not express all his beautiful philosophy of life in one evening. There were little confidences on Mrs. Winston's part, a little idealism and much consolation on Jimmy's. And he did express his sentiments so beautifully. It became quite the usual thing soon for Jimmy to appear at the Winston home on Massachusetts Avenue leading Understanding by the left hand.

Mrs. Winston thought it all out—how it began and how it grew, how she in her desire for understanding had consented to inspect Jimmy's most up-to-date array of samples. She had felt herself drifting from her husband. And Jimmy, pleading that he felt it his duty, had explained the kind of politics her husband was playing. These political maneuvers of Winston, according to the beautiful-minded young Brooks, were not part of the general uplift movement. And from all that young Brooks had said, Mrs.

Winston had gathered that the Uplift was a thing for a pure mind to hook up with—something with rings on its fingers and bells on its toes.

She knew that she ought to love the Uplift like a sister. And thinking it all out on this crucial evening, she felt that it must be fine to be free—free in mind and soul, as Jimmy had said. Jimmy did talk so beautifully.

They would go away. And then what? Jimmy—the dear boy—would write stories for the magazines. She wondered whether the magazine market was low or high just now. She wondered, too, what her friends would think of her. And what would Hilton say? Hilton—dear old Hilton! Certainly he had always been kind enough as far as money was concerned. She was not sordid enough to like money for its own sake; it was just for the things it buys. That is one of the finest things about women; they are never sordid about money—never.

What on earth could be keeping Hilton? It was nearly ten o'clock and he had not yet arrived. Vaguely she thought that she would wait until he went to bed before slipping away. He would be tired after the caucus. That was it—the caucus. The fight was probably on even then. From what he had said she gathered that his great struggle would be to have his friends elected to the investigating committee. She didn't know just what it was all about, but hoped he would make out all right and—

Sitting before the open fireplace Mrs. Winston dozed away. The door downstairs slammed and she awoke with a start. It was Hilton. He came in with glowing face and cheerful smile.

"Lord, girl," he said, "it's a regular old-fashioned snowstorm!"

"How did you make out?" Mrs. Winston asked with interest.

"There, there, now!" said Winston, tapping her shoulder. "You don't want to bother your head with such things, do you?"

"I most certainly do," replied his wife.

"Well, we won out all along the line.

The other faction tried to have Haviland and Maynard appointed, but we beat them to a frazzle."

"And were all your friends appointed?"

"Every single one."

"And was that important?"

"Well, you can just bet it was! You see, it was this way. The Government has been throwing open a lot of land in the West. Most of this land is useful for power sites. I managed to get a whole bunch of it through dummy names and then sold out for cash."

"Did you make a lot?"

Winston had long since resolved never to make a confidant of his wife, but this night he was so full of the thing he had to tell someone of his triumph.

"Several hundred thousand, altogether," he replied.

"And was it illegitimate?" asked Mrs. Winston, surprised to find herself hoping it was.

"No," replied the Congressman emphatically. "To my mind, it was not. If I had been an ordinary citizen not connected with the Government, it would have been perfectly proper. And I don't see why I shouldn't make a little money just because I happen to be part of the Government."

"Why didn't you tell them that?"

"They mightn't understand. You see, there have been all kind of rumors about these Western deals. Haviland and Maynard are the two men who have been hammering hardest about it. Now, even if they had been elected to the committee, they never would have been able to prove anything. But they would have raised a lot of dust—"

"But you spoke about jail."

"Well, you never can tell what may come out of the dust. As it happens, though, everything is fine. My friends will direct the investigation along entirely different lines."

Winston pulled himself up politely. These business details could not possibly interest that pretty wife of his. He really felt that he should give her an interest, so he added:

"And your share of the profits will

be five hundred dollars. So you can buy yourself some little trinket or dress."

"You are a dear," said Mrs. Winston, "and very clever. I know just the gown I want."

Winston really was chock full of understanding. And it wasn't the kind that comes out of a phonograph.

"Poor, silly Jimmy!" thought Mrs. Winston, as she was falling into delicious sleep. "I hope he doesn't catch cold. He's such a dear boy. I will explain to him that it was for his own good."

IV

JIMMY walked up and down, waiting. The snow had turned to sleet and the wind was biting.

"It's a fierce night," said the "taxi" driver, swinging his arms about his body to keep up circulation.

"Fierce," agreed Jimmy, turning up his fur collar.

How stupid he had been to come so soon! It was but half past ten. He would have to wait fully half an hour, and even then she might be late. His feet were wet and cold. He wondered whether this would bring on gripe. Frequently he had said that he would willingly die for Mrs. Winston, but who on earth wants to die from a prosaic old cold? He almost wished he were back home. Elizabeth and his father and mother had been playing bridge when he left.

"Lord, what a start they will have when they hear!" Jimmy reflected. They knew that he was friendly with Mrs. Winston, but never dreamed of his great love for her. Well, what did it matter? Love was the only thing worth living for. It was not merely part of life—it *was* life.

Jimmy wondered vaguely what on earth he would do when he got to New York. He was not quite so sure as he said that he would be able to earn enough money writing magazine stories. Still, he had youth and strength—and Her. He couldn't fail. It might have been a nicer night, though. What on

earth could be keeping her? That was the worst of women—they were always late. It surely must be eleven now. He looked at his watch. It was ten thirty-five. Holy smoke! Twenty-five minutes more in the sleet!

An automobile raced around the corner and into Massachusetts Avenue. Jimmy watched it stop in front of the Winston house. He could see that it was a man who jumped out and ran up the steps. Winston, probably. Well, she was clever. She would not have to talk to him long, and would soon be ready.

Maybe she wouldn't come! Well, if she didn't, she could go to the deuce. He would take his medicine like a man and go home and get into his fine, warm bed. There was nothing objectionable in a fine, warm bed on a night like this.

Women were always whimsical and thoughtless, anyhow. She might have known that he would be early. But of course she didn't care if he caught his death of cold waiting out there. Oh, no; a mere death more or less means little to a woman. They always feel that they are sacrificing everything and the man nothing. Maybe she thought it meant nothing to Jimmy to go away from his family and break his mother's heart! Maybe she thought it was no sacrifice for him to be tied up to a whining woman for the rest of his life. For she *would* whine. Oh, he knew these women—wanting everything on earth and thinking of nobody but themselves.

Good Lord! Did she think he was going to stand there and freeze to death? He could hardly get his watch out of his pockets, his hands were so cold. It was ten forty. He held the watch to his ear to find out if it were running. Yes, it was ticking away gleefully. And she would probably arrive about eleven fifteen and innocently ask: "Did I keep you waiting, dear?"

Jimmy wondered if his father, mother and sister had gone to bed yet. No, they would probably wait, thinking he might come in about midnight. Now

that's just the difference between your own family, to which you give scant attention, and the woman to whom you pay all your homage. Your family loves you and takes care of you; the woman you love expects you, not only to set up the scenery, but to smile when it falls on you. Well, if Mrs. Winston thought Jimmy was that kind of a duck, she was mistaken. He'd be hanged if he would stand in the cold a minute longer.

"Go back to the house where we started from," he said to the chauffeur. The "taxi" man fought with the cranking rod for a minute; the chugging began, and Jimmy bundled himself into the corner of the compartment. Would they never start? He looked at his watch. It was ten fifty. Lord! Suppose she should come just as he was going away! She would think he had repented. What on earth was keeping the stupid? Heavens! He was lighting one of the lamps, which had gone out. If that wasn't always the way! And now that he had started, he wanted to continue. He hated vacillation.

The machine jolted and they were on their way. Jimmy was on his way home. What would she think when she reached the corner with her suit case and found no one there? Well, he would tell her frankly that he had waited till ten minutes past eleven and thought that she had decided not to come. He could add, if she insisted that she was on time, that his watch might have been fast.

He thought of her, wan and wistful, standing there in the sleet, waiting. Poor, dear girl! Well, perhaps it was better this way. What could he offer her in exchange for her splendid home? At least, she was comfortable there. And a wife really should never leave her husband just because of a temporary misunderstanding. Jimmy was becoming certain in this last few min-

utes that the misunderstanding was temporary. Hilton was not a bad sort. He loved her in his own way. It wouldn't be fair to take her away from him and wreck their home.

Besides, wasn't Jimmy, in the final analysis, really proving his love loftier by sacrificing his own longing just to make sure of her future? What right had any man to come between husband and wife? What right, indeed—yes, even though the woman loved him as she did? It was his place—Jimmy's place—to step aside and let the relations between husband and wife adjust themselves.

Hilton really was not half bad. Perhaps his ideals were not high; perhaps he stretched his ethics to meet his business instincts; but there were worse things in the world. And Jimmy's own character was at stake. That, too, must be considered. If he stole another man's wife, wouldn't it make his character weaker? And wouldn't it weaken the character of Mrs. Winston? Ah, that was the important consideration—Mrs. Winston. This desertion of her at the crucial moment might seem cruel, but was it not best for her? Yes, there could be no doubt of it—he was showing the real glory and unselfishness of his love in stepping aside. He was acting a Christian's part toward both husband and wife.

Jimmy's father and mother and sister were all in bed when he got home. He was glad. He was cold and wanted to tumble into bed as soon as he could. He undressed rapidly, turned out the light and crawled in between the sheets with a restful sigh. Jimmy was so full of understanding that it made him luxuriously sleepy.

"Poor, dear girl!" he thought just as sleep had begun to woo him. "Poor girl, I hope she doesn't catch cold. She is such a glorious creature. I will explain to her that it was for her own good."



INTOLERANCE may be cured by experience, but snobbishness is final.

LOVE THOUGHTS

By GERTRUDE M. CANNON

EVERY woman likes to have a man explain her to herself.
Love from gratitude is love by purchase.

What you never told your sweetheart your wife can never twit you with.

Cupid's law knows no statute of limitations.

The man who has to ask a woman if she loves him is too stupid to deserve being loved.

A man who has been refused three times by the same woman deserves nothing better than to be accepted the fourth time.

Almost every young lover might be cut out by some older man who won't take the trouble.



A SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE

By IRENE E. BENSON

A YOUNG Irishman, in want of a five-pound note, wrote to his uncle as follows:

"DEAR UNCLE:

"If you could see how I blush for shame while I am writing, you would pity me. Do you know why? Because I have to ask you for a few pounds, and do not know how to express myself. It is impossible for me to tell you; I prefer to die. I send you this by messenger, who will wait for an answer. Believe me, my dearest uncle,

"Your most obedient and affectionate nephew.

"P.S. Overcome with shame for what I have written, I have been running after the messenger in order to take the letter from him, but I cannot catch him up. Heaven grant that something may happen to stop him, or that this letter may be lost!"

The uncle was naturally touched, but was equal to the emergency. He replied as follows:

"MY DEAR JACK:

"Console yourself and blush no longer. Providence has heard your prayers—the messenger lost your letter.

"Your affectionate uncle."

LA LÉGENDE DE SAINT ELOI

Par HENRI GIRAUD

VOICI comment Père Grand, qui les connaissait toutes, me contait, alors que je n'étais pas plus haut que ça, la légende de Saint Eloi, qui est aussi populaire en Provence que Saint Fefin l'est en Pamparigouste :

— Tu te figureras donc, petit, qu'un beau jour, Notre Seigneur Dieu le Père était plus soucieux que de coutume en son bleu paradis. L'Enfant Jésus vint vers lui et lui dit :

— Qu'avez-vous, Père ?

— J'ai, répondit Dieu, que je ne suis pas content. . . . Tiens, regarde là-bas—et son doigt lui désignait Pamparigouste—tu vois, dans ce village, une forge qui rougeoit ?

— Je vois, Père.

— Eh bien, là se trouve quelqu'un que j'aurais voulu sauver. On l'appelle Eloi. C'est un brave homme qui observe fidèlement mes commandements, il est charitable, de bon compte avec ses pratiques et, sans jamais blasphémer, il "tabasse" sur son enclume de l'aube blanche au coucher du soleil. J'avais toujours eu idée d'en faire un saint.

— Qui vous en empêche, Père ?

Mais son orgueil, mon enfant. Sous prétexte qu'il est un ouvrier de "première main," Eloi se figure que personne n'est au-dessus de lui, et j'ai grand peur que cette idée finisse par le perdre.

— Mon Seigneur Père, répondit Jésus, si vous vouliez me le permettre, je descendrai sur terre et j'essaierai de le convertir.

— Va, Petit.

Et le bon Jésus "dévala" des hauteurs du paradis étoilé.

Son "paqueton" sous le bras, le divin enfant se dirigea tout droit vers la rue où demeurait Eloi. Sur la porte d'Eloi, il y avait un écriteau, et l'écriteau était ainsi conçu :

ELOI LE MARECHAL

*Maître de tous les maîtres
Forge un fer en deux "chaudes"*

Le petit apprenti se présente sur le seuil de la porte et, soulevant son chapeau :

— *Dieu vous le donne bon, maître, et à toute votre compagnie.* N'auriez-vous pas besoin d'un peu d'aide ?

— Pas pour le moment, répond maître Eloi.

— *Adessias*, ce sera pour une autre fois.

Et le bon Jésus continue son chemin. Il y avait justement un "rondelet" d'hommes qui s'entretenaient dans la rue.

— Je n'aurais pas cru, dit Jésus en passant, que dans un atelier pareil, où il doit y avoir tant d'ouvrage, on me refuserait du travail.

— Comment as-tu salué Eloi en entrant ? lui demanda l'un d'eux.

— Eh ! moi, comme on a coutume de saluer : "*Dieu vous le donne bon, maître, et à toute votre compagnie.*"

— Mais il ne fallait pas dire ainsi, il fallait l'appeler maître de tous les maîtres. . . . Regarde-donc l'écriteau.

— C'est vrai, dit Jésus, je vais tenter une nouvelle épreuve. Et, de ce pas, il retourne à la "boutique."

— *Dieu vous le donne bon*, maître de tous les maîtres, n'auriez-vous pas besoin d'un ouvrier?

— Entre, répond maître Eloi, j'ai pensé depuis que nous pourrions t'occuper. Mais entends ceci une fois pour toutes: quand tu me salueras, tu m'appelleras "maître de tous les maîtres," car des hommes comme moi, qui font un fer en deux "chaudes," on n'en trouve pas deux en Provence.

— Ho! répondit l'apprenti, nous, dans notre "endroit," nous les forgeons en une seule.

— En une seule? Tais-toi "margoulin," c'est là une chose impossible.

— Soit! vous allez voir le contraire, maître de tous les maîtres.

Jésus prend un morceau de fer, le jette dans la forge, il souffle, attise le feu et, quand le fer est, rouge vif, il va pour le prendre avec les mains.

— Mais, pauvre "bedigas," lui crie le premier compagnon, tu vas te "rabiner" les doigts.

— N'ayez crainte, répond Jésus, dans notre "endroit" nous n'avons pas besoin de tenailles.

Et le petit ouvrier attrape avec ses mains le fer "flame-rouge," le porte sur l'enclume et, avec son martelet, pin! pôu! patin! patant! en un clin d'œil, lui donne une forme telle qu'on le croirait moulé.

Le premier compagnon, n'en "boufait" pas une.

— Bah! dit maître Eloi, je puis en faire autant.

Zoù! il s'empare d'un lingot de fer qu'il précipite dans le feu, il souffle, attise et, quand le fer est chaud et rouge, il essaye de le prendre avec ses mains. Il a beau faire, il faut qu'il le lâche et courre à ses tenailles. Pendant ce temps, le fer se refroidit. . . . Et zoù et patin, patin, patatan, poum! les étincelles jaillissent. . . . Ah! pauvre maître Eloi, il eut beau "tabasser," il ne put jamais l'achever dans une "chaude."

— Entendez-vous, dit l'apprenti, il me semble ouïr le galop d'un cheval.

Maître Eloi va sur la porte et voit un superbe cavalier qui s'arrête devant sa forge.

— Je viens de loin, mon cheval a perdu deux fers et il me tardait de rencontrer un maréchal-ferrant.

— Qui que vous soyiez, répond Eloi, en se rengorgeant, vous ne pouviez pas mieux réussir. Vous êtes chez le premier maréchal-ferrant de Provence, qui peut se dire le maître de tous les maîtres et qui forge un fer en deux "chaudes." . . . Petit, viens tenir le pied.

— Tenir le pied, répliqua Jésus, nous, dans notre "endroit," nous jugeons la chose inutile.

— Ah! s'écrie le maréchal-ferrant, et comment ferre-t-on dans ton endroit?

— Il n'y a rien de plus simple, et vous allez pouvoir vous en convaincre. . . . Et ayant dit, le Petit s'avance vers le cheval, et cra! lui coupe un pied. Il apporte le pied dans l'atelier, le serre dans l'étau, le nettoie et, après y avoir placé le fer qu'il venait de forger, il desserre l'étau, retourne le pied au cheval, l'ajuste et, se signant: "Mon Dieu, dit-il, que le sang se caille!" Le miracle s'accomplit, et maître Eloi commençait à avoir les "suseurs."

— Après tout, s'écria-t-il, pourquoi ne ferrerais-je pas comme lui. Et zoù! maître Eloi s'avance vers le cheval et cra! lui coupe l'autre pied. Il l'apporte dans l'atelier, le serre dans l'étau, le ferre à son aise, comme avait fait le Petit. Puis—essaye, mais vainement, de le remettre en place, le sang coule de tous les côtés et le pied roule à terre.

Alors l'orgueilleux maître Eloi comprit. . . . Il rentra dans la forge pour se jeter aux genoux de l'apprenti. . . . Mais le Petit avait disparu, aussi le cheval et le cavalier. Les larmes débordèrent de ses yeux, il reconnut enfin qu'il y avait un maître au-dessus de lui et, laissant son tablier et abandonnant sa forge, il alla, par le monde, annoncer la parole de Dieu.

Telle est la légende de Saint Eloi, qu'à la veillée, au coin de l'âtre en flammes, Père Grand me la contait alors que je n'étais pas plus haut que ça.

THE LOTOS AND THE BOTTLE*

By O. HENRY

THE consul was working leisurely on his yearly report. So many thousand bunches of bananas; so many thousand oranges and cocoanuts; so many ounces of gold dust, pounds of rubber, coffee, indigo and sarsaparilla—actually, both exports and imports were twenty per cent greater than for the previous year!

A little thrill of satisfaction ran through the consul. Perhaps the State Department, in reading his introduction, would—and then he leaned back in his chair and laughed. He was getting as bad as the rest of them. For the moment he had forgotten that the island of Tagalon is but an insignificant part of an insignificant republic lying along the byways of an unfrequented sea. He thought of the quarantine doctor, who subscribed for the London *Lancet*, expecting to find it reprinting his reports from Tagalon to the New Orleans Board of Health concerning the yellow fever germ. The consul knew that not one in fifty of his acquaintances in the States had ever heard of Tagalon. He knew that two men, at any rate, would have to read his report—some underling in the State Department and a compositor in the Public Printing Of-

fice. Perhaps the typewriter would notice the increase of commerce in Tagalon, and speak of it to an acquaintance.

He had just written, in his introduction, "most unaccountable is the supineness of our large exporters in permitting the French and German houses to practically control the trade interests of this rich and productive—" when he heard the hoarse tones of a steamer's siren.

Willard Geddie laid down his pen and picked up his Panama hat and umbrella. He strolled out of the consulate and by a devious but shaded way to the beach. The steamer was only the *Valhalla*, one of the regular line of fruit vessels, but half the population of Tagalon had gathered on the beach, according to their custom, to view it. There was no harbor in the island; vessels of the draught of the *Valhalla* anchored a mile from shore.

By reason of long practice the consul gauged his stroll so accurately that by the time he arrived on the beach the custom house officers had already rowed out and completed their duties, and the ship's gig, bringing ashore the purser, was just grating on the shingle.

At college Geddie had been a treas-

* It is a well known fact that the SMART SET has started more writers on the road to fame than any other American periodical in the past ten years. Theodosia Garrison, Gelett Burgess, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Justus Miles Forman, Guy Wetmore Carryl, Baroness von Hutten, Father John B. Tabb, James Branch Cabell, Elsa Barker, Josephine Preston Peabody, Edna Kenton, Josiah Flynt and Gouverneur Morris, all got their first recognition in the pages of the SMART SET. In response to a request, we republish this story by O. Henry, who at his death last month enjoyed the reputation of being the greatest American writer of short stories. This story first appeared in the SMART SET in January, 1902, and was the first or one of the first stories by this then unknown author to be accepted by any leading magazine.

ure as a first baseman. He now closed his umbrella, stuck it upright in the sand, and stooped, his hands resting on his knees. The purser, burlesquing the pitcher's contortions, hurled at him with all his force the heavy roll of newspapers, tied with a string, that the steamer always brought for the consul. Geddie leaped high, and caught the roll with a sounding "thwack." The loungers on the beach laughed and applauded delightedly. Every week they expected that roll to be delivered and received in that same manner, and they were never disappointed. Innovations of any kind did not reach Tagalon.

Geddie rehoisted his umbrella and sauntered back to the consulate—a two-room wooden structure with a native built gallery of bamboo and nipa palm running entirely round it. A somewhat dingy stretch of starred and striped bunting hung from a pole above the door. One room was the official department; furnished chastely with a set of straight back cane chairs, a bamboo couch and a flat top desk covered with the papers of state. Pictures of the first and the latest President hung against the wall. The other room was Geddie's living apartment.

It was eleven o'clock when he returned from the beach, and therefore breakfast time. Chanca, the Carib woman who cooked for him, was just serving the meal on a little table on the shady side of the gallery. It consisted of shark's fin soup, *aguacates*, stew of land crabs, breadfruit, a piece of broiled iguana, a freshly cut pineapple, claret and coffee.

The consul took his seat and unrolled with luxurious laziness his bundle of newspapers. Here in Tagalon for two days he would read of goings on in the world very much as we of the world read those whimsical contributions to inexact science that portray the doings of the Martians. When he had finished with the papers they would be sent on the rounds of the half-dozen English speaking families on the island.

The paper that came first into his hand chanced to be one of those bulky mattresses of printed stuff on which the readers of certain New York journals are supposed to take their Sabbath nap. Opening this, the consul rested it on the table and the back of a chair. Then he partook of his meal deliberately, turning the leaves from time to time and glancing idly at the contents. Presently he was struck by something familiar in a picture—a half-page badly printed photographic reproduction of a vessel. Languidly interested, he leaned over for a nearer scrutiny and a view of the florid headlines of the printed half-columns below the picture.

Yes, he was not mistaken. The engraving was of the 800-ton steam yacht *Idalia*, belonging to "that prince of good fellows, Midas of the money market and society's pink of perfection, J. Ward Tolliver."

Slowly sipping his black coffee, Geddie read the lines beneath the picture. Following a listed statement of Mr. Tolliver's real estate and bonds came a description of the yacht's furnishings, and then the grain of news, no bigger than a mustard seed. Mr. Tolliver, with a party of invited guests, would sail the next day on a six weeks' cruise along the Central and South American coast and among the Bahama Islands. Among the guests were Mrs. Cumberland Payne and Miss Ida Payne, of Norfolk.

The writer, with the fatuous presumption of his ilk, had concocted a romance suited to the palates of his readers. He bracketed the names of Miss Payne and Mr. Tolliver, and all but read the marriage ceremony over them. He played coyly and insinuatingly on the strings of "*on dit*," "a little bird," "Madame Rumor" and "no one would be surprised," and ended with congratulations.

Geddie, having finished his breakfast, took his papers to the west gallery and sat there in his favorite steamer chair, with his feet on the bamboo railing. He lighted a cigar

and looked out over the sea. He felt a glow of satisfaction at finding that he was so little disturbed by what he had read. Yes, he had conquered it. He could never forget Ida; but there was no longer any pain in thinking of her. When they had had that quarrel he had impulsively sought and obtained this far-off consulship filled only with the desire to retaliate on her by detaching himself from her world, and presence. He had succeeded thoroughly in the latter. For eighteen months he had been consul at Tagalon, and no word had passed between them. He sometimes heard briefly of her through his dilatory correspondence with the few friends to whom he still wrote. He could not suppress a little thrill of satisfaction that she had not yet married Tolliver or anyone else. But evidently Tolliver had not given up hope.

Well, it made no difference to him now. He had eaten of the lotos. He was happy and content in this land of perpetual afternoon. Those old days of eager life in the States seemed like an irritating dream. He hoped Ida would be as happy as he was. This climate as balmy as that of distant Avalon; the fetterless, idyllic round of enchanted days; the life among this romantic, indolent people, full of music and flowers and low laughter; the witchery of the imminent sea and mountains, and the many shapes of love and magic and beauty that bloomed in the white tropic nights—with all he was more than content. Also, there was Paula O'Brannigan.

Geddie intended to marry Paula—if, of course, she would consent; but he was rather sure of her feeling toward him. Somehow he kept postponing his proposal. Several times he was quite near to it, but a mysterious something held him back. Perhaps it was only the unconscious conviction that the act would sever the last tie that bound him to his old world.

He could be very happy with Paula.

None of the island girls could compare with her. She had spent two years at school in the States, and when she chose no one could detect any difference between her and the girls in Norfolk or Manhattan. But it was delicious to see her at home dressed, as she sometimes was, in the native costume, with bare shoulders and flowing sleeves.

Barnard O'Brannigan was the great merchant of Tagalon. He was more than well-to-do, living in a house of two stories, with furniture imported, every stick of it, from New Orleans. Paula's mother was a native lady of high Castilian descent, but with a tinge of brown showing through her olive cheek. The union of the Irish and Spanish had produced—as it so often has—an offshoot of rare beauty and vivacity. They were excellent people indeed, and the upper story of their house was ready to be placed at the service of Geddie and Paula as soon as he should make up his mind to speak about it.

In a couple of hours the consul tired of reading. The papers lay scattered about him on the gallery. Reclining there, he looked out on a veritable Eden. A clump of banana plants interposed their broad shields between him and the sun. The gentle slope from the consulate to the sea was covered with the dark-green foliage of lemon and orange trees just bursting into bloom. A lagoon pierced the land like a dark, jagged crystal, and above it pale ceiba trees rose almost to the clouds. The waving cocoanut palm leaves on the beach flared a decorative green against the slate of an almost quiescent sea. His senses were cognizant of brilliant scarlets and ochers amid the *vert* of the coppice, of odors of fruit and bloom and the smoke from Chanca's clay oven under the calabash tree, of the treble laughter of the native women in the huts, the song of a robin, the salt taste of the breeze, the diminuendo of the faint surf running along the shore, and, gradually, of a white speck, growing to a

blur, that intruded itself upon the slaty prospect of the sea.

Lazily interested, he watched this blur increase until it became the *Idalia*, steaming at full speed, coming down the coast. Without changing his position he kept his eyes on the beautiful white yacht, gliding swiftly nearer until she came opposite the little village of Tagalon. Then, sitting upright, he saw her float steadily past and on. Scarcely a mile of sea had separated her from the shore. He had seen the frequent flash of her polished brasswork and the stripes of her deck awnings—so much and no more. Like a ship on a magic slide, the *Idalia* had crossed the illuminated circle of the consul's little world and was gone. Save for the tiny cloud of smoke that she left hanging over the brim of the sea, she might have been an immaterial thing—a chimera of his idle brain.

Geddie went into his office and sat down to dawdle over his report. If the reading of the article in the paper had left him unshaken, this silent passing of the *Idalia* had done for him still more. It had brought the calm and peace of a situation from which all uncertainty had been eradicated. He knew that men sometimes hope without being aware of it. Now, since she had come two thousand miles and had passed without a sign, not even his unconscious self need cling to the past any longer.

After dinner, when the sun was low, Geddie walked on the little strip of beach under the cocoanuts. The wind was blowing landward, and the sea was covered with tiny ripples.

A miniature breaker, spreading with a soft "swish" on the sand, carried with it something round and shining that rolled back again as the wave receded. The next influx beached it again, and Geddie picked it up. It was a long-necked wine bottle of clear glass. The cork had been driven in tightly, level with the mouth, and the end covered with dark red sealing wax. The bottle con-

tained what appeared to be a sheet of paper, half curled from the manipulation it had undergone while being inserted. In the sealing wax was the impression of a signet ring that Geddie knew well—a ring that Ida Payne always wore in preference to jewels of any sort. As Geddie looked at the familiar monogram of the letters, I. P., a queer sensation of disquietude went over him. More personal and intimate was this reminder of her than had been the sight of the vessel she was on. He took the bottle to his house and set it on his desk.

Throwing off his hat and coat, and lighting a lamp, for the night had crowded precipitately on the brief twilight, he began to examine his piece of sea salvage.

By holding the bottle near the light and turning it judiciously he made out that it contained a double sheet of note paper filled with close writing; further, that it was of the size and color that Ida always used, and that, to the best of his belief, the handwriting was hers. The imperfect glass of the bottle distorted the rays of light, so that he could read no word of the writing; but certain capital letters, of which he caught comprehensive glimpses, were Ida's, he felt sure.

There was a little amused smile in Geddie's eyes as he set the bottle down and laid three cigars side by side on the desk. He fetched his steamer chair from the gallery and stretched himself on it comfortably. He would smoke those three cigars while considering the problem.

For it amounted to a problem. He wished he had not found the bottle; but the bottle was there. Why should it have drifted in from the sea, whence come so many disordering things, to disturb his peace?

In this dreamy land, where time seemed so redundant, he had fallen into the habit of bestowing much thought on unimportant matters.

He began to try himself with many fanciful theories concerning the story

of the bottle, disposing of each in turn. Ships in danger of wreck or disablement generally sent such things out. But he had seen the *Idalia* not three hours before, safe and speeding. Girls at sea had been known thus to distribute bottled messages, in gratification of a mild and harmless sort of humor. But it was not characteristic of Ida to do such a thing. Suppose the crew had mutinied and imprisoned the passengers below, and the message was one begging for succor? But, premising such an improbable thing, would the agitated captives have taken the pains to fill four pages of note paper with carefully penned arguments for rescue?

Thus, by the process of elimination, he soon rid the matter of the more unlikely theories, and was—though aversely—reduced to the less assailable one, that the bottle contained a message to himself. She knew he was there; it must have been launched as the yacht was passing and the wind blowing fairly toward shore.

As soon as Geddie reached this half-conclusion a wrinkle came between his brows and a stubborn look settled round his mouth. He sat looking out at the giant fireflies traversing the narrow grass-grown streets.

If this was a message from Ida to him, what could it be save an overture toward a reconciliation? And if that, why had she not used the safe methods of the post instead of this uncertain and even flippant means? A note in an empty bottle, cast into the sea! There was something light and frivolous about it, if not actually contemptuous.

The thought stirred his pride and subdued whatever emotions had been resurrected by the finding of the bottle.

Geddie put on his coat and hat and walked out. He followed a street that led him along the border of a little plaza, where a band was playing and people were rambling care-free and happy. Some timorous *senoritas* scurrying past, with fireflies

tangled in the jetty braids of their hair, glanced at him with dark provocative eyes. The air was languorous with the scent of jasmine and orange blossoms.

The consul stayed his steps at the house of Barnard O'Brannigan. Paula was swinging in a hammock on the gallery. She rose from it like a bird from its nest. The color came to her cheek at the sound of Geddie's voice.

He was charmed at the sight of her costume — a flounced muslin dress, with a little jacket of white flannel, all made with neatness and style. He suggested a walk, and they went to the old Indian well on the hill road. They sat on the curb, and there Geddie spoke. Certain though he had been that she would not say him nay, he was thrilled with joy at the completeness of her surrender. Here was a heart made for love and steadfastness. No caprice or questioning or captious standards of conventions here.

When Geddie kissed Paula at her door that night and walked toward his own house he was happier than he had been ever before. "Here in this hollow lotos land to ever live and lie reclined," seemed to him, as it has seemed to many mariners, the best as well as the easiest. His future would be an ideal one. He had attained a paradise without a serpent. His Eve was indeed a part of him, unbeguiled, and, therefore, more beguiling. It would be a happy day when he would cut that last slender filament that reached across the sea. Here should be Willard Geddie's home and his future. He had decided that tonight, and his heart was full of a serene, assured content.

Geddie went into his house whistling that finest and saddest love song, "La Golondrina." At the door his tame monkey leaped down from his shelf and looked up at him, chattering briskly. The consul turned to his desk to get him some nuts he usually kept there. Reaching in the half-darkness, his hand struck against the bottle. He had forgotten it

was there. Geddie was either startled or reminded into giving vent to something very near a mild oath.

He lighted the lamp and fed the monkey; then he took the bottle in his hand and walked down the path to the beach.

There was a moon, and the sea was glorious. The breeze had shifted, as it did each evening, and was now rushing steadily seaward.

Stepping to the water's edge, Geddie hurled the bottle far out into the sea. It disappeared for a moment and then shot upward twice its length above the water. Geddie stood watching it. The moonlight was so bright he could see it bobbing up and down with the little waves. Slowly it receded from the shore, flashing and turning as it went. The wind was carrying it out to sea. Soon it became a mere black speck, doubtfully discerned at irregular intervals, and then the mystery of it was swallowed up by the mystery of the ocean. Geddie stood on the beach, smoking, and looking out across the water.

Old Simon Early was a half-breed fisherman living in a hut close to the shore. He owned the sloop *Pajaro*, that was anchored to the little cove to windward.

Simon was wakened from his earliest nap by a voice calling him. Slipping on his shoes, he went out-

side. He saw one of the boats from the *Valhalla* just landing on the beach. His name was called again, and he went down to the boat. The third mate of the *Valhalla*, an acquaintance of Simon, was there with three sailors from the fruiter.

"Go up, Simon," said the mate, "and tell Dr. Parrish, at the hotel, or Mr. Wellesly, or anybody else you can think of that's a friend to Mr. Geddie, the consul, to come here right away."

"Saints of the skies!" said Simon sleepily. "Nothing has happened to Mr. Geddie?"

"He's under that tarpauling," said the mate, pointing to the boat, "and he's rather more than half drowned. We seen him from the *Valhalla* nearly a mile out from shore, swimmin' like mad after a bottle that was floatin' on the water, outward bound. We lowered the gig and started for him. He nearly had his hand on the bottle when he give out and went under. We pulled him out in time to save him, maybe, but the doctor is the man to decide that."

"A bottle!" said the old man, rubbing his eyes. He was not yet fully awakened. "Where is the bottle?"

"Driftin' on out there some'eres," said the mate, jerking his thumb toward the sea. "Get on with you, Simon."



THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

By ARTHUR STRINGER

TWO things confront the stars, from time untold,
 As bruised of fate, man whirls his life away
 And feels the inexorable fingers that remold
 Each shattered hope and dream of yesterday:
 The silence of the Potter, and the old
 "Oh, why hast Thou done this?" of tortured clay!

FAUST UP TO DATE

By AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

FAUST and Mephistopheles were pacing the deck of the steamer.

She had been under way a bare six hours, the measure of their acquaintance, but already Faust's hand lay on Mephistopheles's shoulder with a confiding pressure after the wont of these two since the world began. Mephistopheles smiled to think how many such hands had rested there while his long suffering ear served for receptacle for ingenuous recitals of would-be wickedness. Mephistopheles's own vices were neither petty nor coarse, as a rule, and his eyebrows went up a little in whimsical expostulation as Faust waxed more and more confidential, his desire to impress his new acquaintance evidently leading him to recur for corroborative detail to surreptitious perusals of Boccaccio masked by the cover of the *Anabasis* in his not far distant schooldays. For a time the older man listened, smiling, then gradually ceased to hear, though he still nodded mechanically from time to time, his eyes fixed on the wonder of the moonlit sea. Faust rambled contentedly on, till at last his voice, stopping abruptly on a rising inflection, recalled Mephistopheles to the actual.

"You have such tact," insinuated Faust.

Mephistopheles smiled graciously.

"I think I have not noticed her," he murmured, recognizing a familiar cue.

"They sit next you at the table," insisted Faust. "You were talking with the aunt—it is her aunt, you know."

"Oh, that little one," said Mephistopheles. "But I will not talk to the aunt while you amuse yourself. Any-

thing but that! I have not yet arrived at the Garden Scene."

Faust smirked away the allusion.

"She is seasick, anyway—the aunt, I mean. Only introduce me to the girl."

"Is that necessary?" queried Mephistopheles skeptically.

"Nothing doing without," replied Faust. "I saw another fellow try it."

Mephistopheles opened his eyes wider.

"But after that," hastened Faust, "she's just one of these simple little things—"

"Ah!" said Mephistopheles thoughtfully. "The real *ingénue* is unusual nowadays. An interesting type, if—"

"Look here; you're not getting your own eye on her, are you?"

"No, thank you," said Mephistopheles. "You may encounter rivalry from the ship's surgeon or the first officer, but not from me. I expect to be somewhat diverted by an acquaintance of mine who is on board—a lady not quite a widow. The husband manufactures whiskey. She is constant to him in that aspect, at least."

Faust stared. "Must be a pretty jolly sort," he said, with a certain easy familiarity his tone had lacked before.

Mephistopheles winced. "One some time eats boiled cabbage," he murmured apologetically. He suddenly remembered how clumsily her hair was dyed; he detested women with purple hair.

"The larky kind is good fun once in a while," Faust was saying. "There was a Mrs.—"

Mephistopheles's attention had floated away on the silver path of moonlight; he was essentially a sentimentalist.

The next day he introduced Faust to the girl so adroitly that she suspected no premeditation. She was very glad to make so pleasant and personable an acquaintance, as her aunt was in that stage of seasickness where any presence but that of the steward is one misery the more. After a few jocosely paternal remarks, Mephistopheles strolled away. "She is charming, the little Marguerite," he thought, as he avoided the purple-haired lady with an expert dexterity—"charming, though conventional. My young friend should have a pleasant voyage."

Judging from his young friend's absorption during the day, the pleasant voyage had begun fairly. Once or twice Mephistopheles in passing saw a distressed little frown between Marguerite's pretty brows, and once the tears seemed not far away. He experienced a quite inexplicable impulse to kick Faust, then shrugged it away with a curl of his lip.

"She listens, none the less," he thought; "she is always the same, the Young Person."

Faust sought her out after dinner, though she tried to avoid him. "Or pretended to try," Mephistopheles was thinking, as he came suddenly upon a dark corner of the deck in a solitary promenade. To his astonishment,

Marguerite ran to him, and he felt her hand tremble on his arm.

"Oh," she sobbed—"oh, he was so rude! I am so glad you have come! You will take care of me, won't you?"

The rest of the voyage was dull for Faust and the purple-haired lady, but for Marguerite and Mephistopheles it was replete with new sensations. Mephistopheles, upon whose palate everything from cabbage to caviare had palled, found himself fostering an ever increasing relish for bread and milk. The speech in which he confessed vaguely but inclusively to a worse than wasted life, and compared Marguerite's eyes to stars amid the tempest, was a triumph of banality. She looked up at him trustfully.

"I read in a book," said Marguerite, "that no past is too dark to be reclaimed by real love."

"Angel!" replied Mephistopheles. "If there were more women like you in the world, there would be—"

It hardly seems fair either to Mephistopheles or to the reader to continue.

People said Marguerite was marrying Mephistopheles to reform him. So far, she had succeeded beyond the expectations of everyone, including Mephistopheles.



THE BROOK

By FRANCIS LIVINGSTON MONTGOMERY

MY rune is never wholly told,
My moods are changeful as the light;
Beside me grow the cowslip gold
And violet white.

A tear dropped from a cloud gave birth
To me, and all the melody
I lavish as I flow o'er earth
From fount to sea.

A HOT WEATHER NOVELIST

By H. L. MENCKEN

WHEN George Moore looks at human life he sees it as a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the impulse to have a high old time and the yearning to get to Heaven; when Thomas Hardy looks at it he sees it as a hopeless tragedy; when Joseph Conrad looks at it he sees it as a meaningless and insoluble riddle. I might go on thus for pages, pointing out the differences in point of view which set off author from author, school from school, philosophy from philosophy. Rabelais and Thackeray were cynics and so they saw life as a great game of make-believe, with all of the participants wearing grotesque cloaks and masques; Dickens was a maudlin sentimentalist and so he saw it as an affecting morality play, with hymns by the choir and a collection for the orphans; Sterne and Congreve were liquorish revelers and blacklegs and so they saw it as a wild carouse. Our American manufacturers of best sellers, having the souls of fudge-besotted high school girls, behold the human comedy as a mixture of fashionable wedding and three-alarm fire, with music by François Frédéric Chopin; the pornographic lady novelists of England, having the outlook of elderly and immoral virgins, see it as a Paris peep show. Finally, there are the happy fellows who see life as a joke—not as a hollow and mirthless joke, but as one of innocent merriment all compact, with a faint undercurrent, let us say, of honest sentiment. To that select and genial congregation belongs W. J. Locke, author of "SIMON THE JESTER" (*Lane*, \$1.50).

Upon Locke's delightful foolery there

is no need to discourse at length. You are all familiar with it; you have all read his "Septimus"—or these dissertations of mine have been in vain. Well, "SIMON THE JESTER" is cut from the same sort of cloth, but from a bolt of different and even more attractive pattern. That is to say, it is just as amusing as "Septimus" but a bit more plausible, just as ingenious but a bit more human. I know of no better book to read upon a lazy summer afternoon in hammock or deck chair or spread out upon a shady river bank, carefree and shirtless. You will chuckle through it from cover to cover, forgetting the mosquitoes and the cost of high living, and when you have done you will pass it on to someone you really like. The orthodox critical vocabulary doesn't do justice to it. One must borrow from the vulgar *argot* of Presidents and say that it is "bully."

The story itself is of the simplest—and most incredible—variety. Simon de Gex, M.P., warned by the first pathologists of Harley Street that he is suffering from a rare and extremely interesting disease and that he has but six months to live, resigns his seat in Parliament and resolves to devote his fortune and his remaining time on earth to doing good. At once a candidate for his philanthropy appears in the person of Dale Kynnersley, his dashing young secretary. Dale is as good as engaged to Maisie Ellerton, of the excellent Ellerton family, but he has become enmeshed in the toils of Madame Lola Brandt, a retired circus performer. How is he to be saved? Simon resolves to begin operations by calling upon Mme. Brandt, which he does at

her home in Cadogan Gardens—and finds her a most extraordinary woman indeed. She smokes atrocious cigarettes; her house is a museum of ornamental horrors and she discourses in astonishing slang; but Simon notes, beneath her strange exterior, the heart of a good, and even civilized woman. Next day he comes back to have speech with her again, and the day following and the day after that.

Well, you have probably guessed the end of the story. Simon, of course, marries Lola himself, and thus saves Dale, by heroic philanthropy, from destruction at her hands. But before that comes to pass there are all sorts of barbaric adventures, including a trip to Algiers to find Lola's recreant and scoundrelly first husband, and a score of disconcerting encounters with Professor Anastasius Papadopoulos, dwarf and dreamer, cat king and murderer. The Professor, in truth, is one of Mr. Locke's most diverting creations. He is a dapper little fellow of three feet six inches, with a Napoleon III imperial and a fatherly affection for Lola. His conversation is made up of an earthly mixture of English, French, German and Italian. He couples German adjectives with Italian nouns, French subjects with English predicates. And in the end he plunges a dagger into the brisket of Lola's abominable first husband, thus clearing the way for her alliance with Simon—and going to an Algerian lunatic asylum for his pains.

The soothsayers of Harley Street, of course, were wrong. Simon does not really die. He is, however, just on the point of doing so when a French surgeon in Algiers, a brisk, pushing young fellow, kidnaps him, etherizes him, saws into his interior—and cures him. Simon is really much disgusted. He has resigned his seat in Parliament; he has lost all his friends by his scandalous cavortings with Lola, he has given away all his money, and he is under a moral obligation, if he ever gets back to London a well man, to marry another girl. But all of these difficulties are surmounted, one by one. Kind friends

find the melancholy jester a job; the other girl washes her hands of him, and he takes Lola to wife.

A string of impossibilities? Of course it is, from Chapter One to the end. But somehow you feel that Simon himself is not impossible nor even improbable, that Lola is altogether too human and delightful to be impossible, that even Professor Anastasius Papadopoulos, gold and silver medallist, the Cat King—*le Roi des Chats—der Katzen König*, is as real as the barber who shaved you this morning. Such is the magic of W. J. Locke. Let us thank the good Lord for so clean and stimulating a comedian! Such fellows deserve three cheers!

"THE GIRL FROM THE MARSH CROFT," by Selma Lagerlöf (*Little Brown*, \$1.50), is a collection of short stories by the Swedish woman who recently arrested the attention of the whole world by capturing one of the Nobel prizes. I do not venture to quarrel with the award of the learned judges, for my acquaintance with Miss Lagerlöf's work is confined to the present volume, but this I *do* know, that the short stories here printed are, in the main, of an exceedingly commonplace sort. There are, indeed, a score of writers in the United States today who could do as well, and who, in point of fact, have actually done as well. The best thing in the book is an autobiographical note at the close, in which the author describes her early doubts and difficulties and tells of the help given to her, with open-handed generosity, by another Swedish woman, the Baroness Adlersparre.

"THE UNSEEN THING," by Anthony Dyllington (*Luce*, \$1.50), is an English thriller of conventional cut, but showing a great deal of fluency and plausibility in the writing. Guy Hilmour, a young Englishman, is obsessed by a vague fear of the abnormal and deformed. A black eye or broken nose sets him to trembling; the sight of blood sends him galloping to the woods. One day his sweetheart breaks her leg,

and when news reaches him that she will be lame, he promptly deserts her, going to the Riviera to visit his parents, Lord and Lady Francheville, who have been living there in mysterious retirement for thirty years. The cause of their strange exile soon appears; they have another son, born a monster, and he has been imprisoned since birth in a room of their house. Lord Francheville tells Guy the secret and insists that he go up to the room and have a look at his gibbering brother, but he shrinks back in horror. And then Lord Francheville dies, and Lady Francheville after him, and Spense, their faithful butler, after her—and Guy is now the only person in the world who knows of the unearthly prisoner. Has he courage enough to face that horror, to go up alone and feed his brother? He has not. But the real Lord Francheville, of course, does not actually starve to death. To let him do so would be altogether too barbarous and disgusting. I am not going to tell you how he escapes—you must go to the book for that. You will find it a book with a great deal more merit in it than such thrillers commonly show.

In "THE WINNING GAME," by Madge Macbeth (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.50), we come upon the sad story of a charming young American girl married to a drunken and dissolute Englishman. How to save him from his highballs and his hussies—here is a tough problem indeed! But his fair young wife solves it. Against his intolerable polygamy she proceeds by disguising herself as one of his harem beauties. When in pursuance of his routine he drags her to his den of iniquity, she strips off her disguise and sears his soul with the hot flash of her indignant eye. His lesson learned, he promises to break the seventh commandment no more. But he is still a drinking man—a lush, in fact, with one foot constantly upon the rail. How to cure him? Again that resourceful wife of his is equal to the task. What would be easier than feigning drunkenness? She is familiar with the outward symptoms

of that condition, and she gives an astonishingly realistic performance. He is horrified, disgusted—cured! Such a story!

IN two of the new novels, "THE RIGHT STUFF," by Ian Hay (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.20), and "THE MAN HIGHER UP," by Henry Russell Miller (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), there are heroes who fight their way up from poverty and obscurity to honor and eminence in the State. Mr. Hay's hero is a sturdy Scotch lad, a feeder upon that potent oat which makes marvelous horses in England and marvelous men beyond the Tweed. The story of his slow climb up the ladder to the dizzy heights of the House of Commons is told with unfailing skill and good humor. There is, indeed, something hearty and wholesome about the whole book. The scene of "The MAN HIGHER UP" is apparently Pittsburg, and its hero is a runaway who has the rare good fortune to be adopted by a policeman. From his foster-father he gets two things, a deep respect for the law and a considerable knowledge of ward politics. The combination makes his fortune. He goes up, up, up. He becomes mayor, governor, a great man. Mr. Miller's literary manner, it must be confessed, leaves much to be desired, but somehow he contrives to avoid many of the worst faults of the best seller manufacturers. The illustrations by M. Leone Bracker are of unusual merit.

"WHIRLPOOLS," by Henryk Sienkiewicz (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), is a grimly realistic study of modern Poland, that most demoralized and decadent of civilized nations. One feels from the very start that the actual personages of the tale are of much less importance than the background, that it is the pitiful story of a racked and ruined people and not the mere history of individuals that one is asked to attend. Sienkiewicz is no painter of miniatures, no dealer in subtleties. He lays on his colors with a whitewash brush; his canvas is as large as all outdoors. But the effects he achieves justify his

Broddingnagian sweep and fury. He has attempted here an epic of lost hope, and it must be said for him that he has made it dignified, poignant and impressive. The faults of the book arise out of the author's emotional absorption in his tale. A Pole is not quite the right man to tell the story of Poland's decay.

In "THE BURNT OFFERING," by Mrs. Everard Cotes (*Lane*, \$1.50), we visit India and are making privy to desperate conspiracies against the British invader. Vulcan Mills, a member of Parliament, and his daughter Joan are the principal Caucasians involved. Mills sympathizes with the nationalistic aspirations of the Babus and visits their land to tell them so. When one of them acquires a yearning to marry his daughter, he offers her upon the altar of brotherhood, nobly throttling his quite human aversion to a black and tan son-in-law. But the marriage never comes to pass, for on its eve the bridegroom-elect hurls a bomb at the Viceroy and has to commit suicide to escape the gendarmes. A long and depressing story, with a great deal of Anglo-Indian politics in it.

THERE is not much action in "FRANKLIN WINSLOW KANE," by Anna Douglas Sedgwick (*Century Co.*, \$1.50). It is the slow moving tale of an intellectual wooing, in the course of which both hero and heroine wander far afield, only to come together again at the end in a passionless, despairing sort of embrace. Not until Page 84 does the hero actually appear upon the scene. But if Mrs. de Séincourt thus fails to provide us with the thrills to which, by reason of the assiduity of the Indiana school, we have become accustomed, it must be urged in her defense that she offers us writing of a quality entirely unknown and perhaps even unsuspected on the Wabash. She has, in a word, something to say, and she says it with quite unusual clarity and charm. A book to be read slowly, and, as the Spaniards have it, with the head.

More novels: "ANNE OF TRÉBOUL," by Marie Louise Goetchius (*Century*

Co., \$1.20), a graceful and sympathetic little tale of the Breton fisher folk, with plenty of color in it; "THE PURSUIT," by Frank Savile (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), an exciting chronicle of love making and adventure along the Mediterranean, in which a boy millionaire, his fair young guardian and a dashing British officer are the principal personages; and "THE CALENDARED ISLES," by Harrison Jewell Holt (*Badger*, \$1.50), a tale with a newspaper reporter for its hero and Casco Bay for its chief scene.

Finally, there is a slim volume of "LETTERS TO MY SON," by an anonymous Englishwoman (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.00). The son has yet to make his appearance in this accursed world, and now and then one is tempted to wonder, maliciously, what will happen if he turns out to be a girl; but meanwhile there is plenty of naïve self-revelation in these sentimental epistles. One becomes convinced, somehow, that the dreams of a woman approaching motherhood for the first time must be such and so. These high hopes have something of nobility in them; these little vanities are intensely human. Altogether, the book rings true and is worth reading.

A VERY amusing little volume is "MODERN WOMAN AND HOW TO MANAGE HER," by Walter M. Gallichan (*Lane*, \$1.50), but I regret to have to report that it will probably be of small value to downtrodden and baffled husbands. What such poor wretches stand in need of is a book setting forth the secret of wife management in a series of brief and understandable rules—rules as clear, let us say, as those laid down by Johann Sebastian Bach for playing the Jew's harp, to wit: 1. Find a Jew who has a harp; 2. Borrow it; 3. Play it. Mr. Gallichan shows no such directness, no such clarity, no such mastery of his subject. Every now and then one feels that he is on the point of revealing the secret, but always that expectation is disappointed, and so one comes to the end of his book without having gained much information. But meanwhile one has soaked

up many interesting ideas borrowed openly or by stealth from the writings of Havelock Ellis, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer, Edward Bok, William Shakespeare, François Rabelais, Dr. R. Krafft-Ebing, Dorothy Dix, Sir Francis Galton, Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Prof. Karl Pearson, the Bishop of Hippo, John Stuart Mill and sundry other philosophers, sane and insane, he and she, dead and alive.

After all, why should any man want to have his wife under his thumb? What a dull world it would be if women were as docile as guinea pigs! The man of true efficiency enjoys the duel of sex, as he enjoys every other hazardous game. As a bachelor, he delights in the society of the anthropophagous fair. The more ingenious the ambushes they prepare for him, the more pleasure he gets out of evading them; the more savagely they gallop after him, the more swiftly and dexterously he retreats to his monastic cell. It is kingly sport, indeed! There is always the dizzy danger that the player may lose—that, soon or late, some unusually determined virgin or abnormally accomplished widow will snare him. And suppose he does so lose? Does he then beat his breast in vain grief or tear his hair or jump into the river? Not at all. On the contrary, he marches up to the sacrificial altar with the smile of an honorable sportsman upon his face. He has lost the first inning—but there is another to play! Henceforth, instead of a hundred antagonists, he will have but one. Let her beware! Against her feminine chicanery he will pit his masculine craft, against her insidious cajolery his solid sense, against her tears his guffaw. And out of the contest he will get constant stimulation. It will brace him, test him, keep him at concert pitch. He will be the better for the battering he receives.

Mr. Gallichan's book, as I have said, is useless, for it fails to set forth a comprehensible recipe for managing the dear girls; but it would be just as useless, save to mollicoddles, if it did. The true dionysian doesn't want to

attack his antagonist unfairly, with secret and magical formulas. He wants a run for his money, an equal battle, a chance to prove his mettle.

A PAIR of autobiographies. The first is "FROM THE BOTTOM UP," by Alexander Irvine (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), a gentleman who plainly regards himself with considerable admiration. Mr. Irvine was born a pauper in Ireland; he has since been a British sailor, a Bowery evangelist, a magazine muck-raker, an amateur theologian, a sociologist; he is now a Socialist spellbinder. I am unable to see anything remarkable in this career or to discern anything worth hearing in Mr. Irvine's remarks upon it; but his book, of course, has something of that interest which attaches to all biography. The other book is of far better quality. It is called "CONFESSIONS OF BOYHOOD" (*Badger*, \$1.50), and it is a most delightful account of the writer's life in a remote New England village sixty years ago. His name is John Albee and he writes the English language in the fashion of one who loves it and senses its beauty. It is a long while, indeed, since a more agreeable book of reminiscences has come to me. It has sentiment without the slightest trace of sentimentalist; it is altogether fragrant and refreshing and human.

"SELF HELP AND SELF CURE," by Elizabeth Wilder and Edith Mendall Taylor, is called "a primer of psychotherapy" and is full of the *naïveté* so characteristic of the professors of that occult and incredible "science." Opening it at random, I find, for example, on Page 77, the astonishing statement that "sleep is almost wholly under the control of the will." This in a book designed to aid the tortured and despairing victim of insomnia! More specific directions are on the next page. The sufferer, tossing upon his couch, is solemnly advised to "shut out thought." But how? Apparently by thinking hard that he is not thinking!

On Page 129 there is more magic,

to wit: "Affirm that those whom you would wish (*sic*) to help will fight, will conquer, will be well in body, mind and spirit, will rise to spiritual uplifts (*sic*). Night is the special time to accomplish this, when you have reason to believe that the sufferers in question are asleep or about to go to sleep. At that time *the thought sent out makes a deeper impression for permanent effects*. In the case of young children, stand by them as they are dropping off to sleep, assert that they will grow in spiritual grace, affirm that certain known evil tendencies will disappear, and that more and more they will be led by the Spirit. The result is sure if the practice is persisted in."

Did you ever hear the like of that nonsense—that mixture of vague quasi-science and theological balderdash? Believe me, it is not a matter for mirth. There is something depressing in the spread of psychotherapy. For a thousand years brave and honorable men have been fighting to free the science of medicine from the clutches of superstition and magic. Heroes without number have given their lives to the cause; it has enlisted the very flower of the human race. I need not call a long roll of names; you know them as well as I: Vesalius, Jenner, Boylston, Pasteur, Huxley, Haeckel, Hunter and a thousand more, great and small. And now in the twentieth century, with that long struggle beginning to bear its splendid fruit, with plague after plague yielding to exact knowledge and the span of human life lengthening as the burden of human suffering lightens—in these glorious days of achievement there arise crusaders who call upon us to go back to prayer and pestilence, to place medicine within the clutches of the theologians once more, to put our faith again in cabalistic formulas, empty affirmations and idle dreams, in vague spiritism and intolerable priestcraft! And hundreds of Americans, presumably sane, give solemn heed to these preposterous prophets! It is to weep.

Books about the theater show a gratifying tendency to increase in number as the years chase one another down the dim corridors of time. A generation ago we of English tongue got our dramatic criticism, as we got nearly all of our contemporary plays, from the Continent. That was the heyday of Sydney Grundy, Bronson Howard, Augustin Daly and other such honest union men on the stage itself, and of William Winter, Clement Scott and other such gallery gods in dress suits at the critical desk. Our native plays were so hopelessly childish that no sane man would dare print them in books, and our native criticism was a compound of empty rhetoric and paleozoic ideas, of fustian and flabdoodle. A happier day has dawned. We have now in England and America fully a score of dramatists whose plays are worth studying and preserving, and we have, too, a small but growing corps of critics of learning and intelligence. As a result the reading public has begun to take the theater seriously once more. The dramas of Pinero, Jones, Shaw, Sutro, Phillips, Mackaye, Galsworthy, Barker, Moody, Yeats and Kennedy are printed almost before they are played, and all of us have learned to turn with eager expectancy to the reviews and studies of Archer, Walkley, Gosse, Shaw, Huneker, Beerbohm, Fyfe and Moses.

One of the men who has helped to bring about this change, at least in America, is Professor Brander Matthews, of Columbia University. Professor Matthews, I am well aware, is not the most profound critic that ever lived. He is, indeed, far more the journalist than the philosopher, and most of his critical canons are merely reports from France. Not a few professed journalists, such as Walkley, Archer and Shaw for example, have greatly surpassed him in their personal contributions to the theory of the theater. But for all that, his life work has been of notable value to the American stage. He has done much to arouse public interest in the drama as an art form; he has given us the best account in English

of that mid-century French stage from which the latter day play of ideas has sprung; and the doctrines that he has preached, if not often original, have at least been reasonably sound.

His latest book, "A STUDY OF THE THEATER" (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.50), is a collection of essays more or less connected, and dealing in the main with the mechanics and conventions of play making. There is, for example, an acute and interesting paper showing how the modern stage acquired its present form, and how that form limits and handicaps the dramatist; there is another, of equal value, defining the various species of drama and pointing out their interrelation; and there are yet others upon the poetic play, the half-forgotten dramatic unities, the influence of the actor, the part played by the audience and the differences which separate the drama of Shakespeare's day from the drama of our own time. Finally, there is an excellent chapter upon theatrical devices, current and extinct—the confidante, the screen, the chorus, the soliloquy and their like. Altogether, it is a book that should be read by every intelligent theatergoer—a book showing keen observation, wide knowledge, profitable reflection and good sense.

In "THREE PLAYS" (*Kennerley*, \$1.50), a new English dramatist, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, makes her bow. Of the three the most important is the first one, "Hamilton's Second Marriage," a very suave and workmanlike bit of writing. Hamilton is an Englishman who marries early in life and takes his young wife out to India, where his neglect of her drives her into the arms of another man. When the play opens it is fifteen years afterward. Hamilton comes back to England, rich and sentimental, and promptly falls in love with Sylvia Callender, a somewhat commonplace young woman. When his long lost wife bobs up, repentant but still handsome, Sylvia gives him the mitten—and he is caught on the rebound by Mrs. Hamilton No. One, who straightway becomes Mrs. Hamilton No. Two. The chief fault of the

play is that it has a broken back. That is to say, the principal interest is diverted near the middle of the action from Sylvia to Hamilton, and in consequence it presents the effect, not of one homogeneous drama, but of two dramas joined together. But there are abundant merits in detail, and one puts down the play and the two following with the conviction that Mrs. Clifford has a true vocation for the theater and will give us very good work later on.

"CHILDREN OF DESTINY," by Sydney Rosenfeld (*Dillingham*, 50 cents), is of far less consideration. Mr. Rosenfeld, indeed, is a dramatic craftsman of extremely archaic method. In the early eighties the incredible characters and mechanical situations that he here sets before us would have been received with tears of joy, but a great deal of water has gone under the bridges since the day of "Hazel Kirke" and "The Young Mrs. Winthrop." Today the maudlin story of Rose Hamlin and her brand of dishonor, of Edwin Ford and his melancholy devilishness, strikes us as merely comic, and we reward the perspiring dramatist with a cruel guffaw.

A book which well proves that growth of interest in the theater of which I have discoursed is "THE DRAMATIC INDEX FOR 1909." (*Boston Book Co.*, \$3.50.) Here we have a folio volume of over two hundred pages in which an effort is made to record under one alphabet every book or article upon the stage printed in English during 1909. Even photographs of stars in the illustrated magazines are indexed, and there are also references to all foreign plays of importance published during the year. The book was undertaken by F. W. Faxon, with the help of twenty-four librarians, and other volumes upon the same plan will follow year by year. Let us commend these hardy adventurers for their enterprise, industry and accuracy.

THE admirers of Alfred Noyes, that astonishing young Englishman, will

find delight and disappointment in almost equal measure in his latest volume, "THE ENCHANTED ISLAND" (Stokes, \$1.25). There are here a number of truly striking poems, with the roar of great music in them, and there are here, too, a number of very commonplace poems, with little in them but tedious words. Mr. Noyes stands in constant peril of overwriting. Too often he keeps on singing after he has sung his song. The result is that the shorter poems in the collection are far more satisfying than the longer ones. One of the most striking of the former is an apostrophe to the city of Edinburgh—twenty-four lines of ringing, electric verse. A ballad on Nelson shows almost equal merit, and there is great beauty in a carol for May Day. Mr. Noyes, at his best, is a poet of the first consideration, and even at his worst he deserves a respectful hearing.

Madison Cawein's book of "NEW POEMS" (Richards, 5s.) comes from London. There are all sorts of things in the collection, including two sonnets on moonshining, a somewhat elemental attempt at a rhymed satire and a sonnet sequence on the night riders of Kentucky(!), but Mr. Cawein's thoughts turn most often to Nature in her varying moods. It may be said for him that his wanderings in field and forest are not without their very agreeable discoveries. More than one stanza of haunting beauty is in this little book. But in other places there are poems with no more poetry in them than a college yell—three amateurish sonnets to Lincoln, for example. An air of melancholy is over all.

No melancholy is visible in John Kendrick Bangs's "SONGS OF CHEER" (Sherman-French, \$1.00). Here we have, on the contrary, the glad songs of a bard who is firmly convinced that the world is a very pleasant place and its people very pleasant folk. The verse is always suave and soothing, graceful and unpretending. More ambitious stuff is to be found in "THE FROZEN GRAIL," by Elsa Barker (Duffield, \$1.25). The poem which gives the collection its title was written

and dedicated to Commander Peary before his last departure northward, and he liked it so well that he carried a copy of it, he says, to the Pole. The dispassionate reader will probably find greater merit in some of the other verses in the book—particularly in some of the songs, which have no little melody and beauty.

Finally, comes "THYSIA," a sonnet sequence by an anonymous poet (Kernerley, \$1.00). The note in these is that of sorrow and resignation: the poet is a husband bereft and his sonnets constitute a sort of elegy upon the death of his wife. The danger here, of course, is that of growing maudlin, but it is a danger to which the nameless singer never succumbs. It is a long while, indeed, since I have happened upon a more beautiful series of poems. There is in them nothing of the lush richness of William Watson's sonnets, with their barbaric piling up of figures and images; instead, they show the fine simplicity, the leaning toward the homely Anglo-Saxon monosyllable which marks the exquisite sonnets of Miss Reese. I recommend the book to all who love true poetry. Sincerity and beauty are upon every page of it.

AN EPIC OF HEAVEN—

by Edward S. Creamer.

(Broadway Pub. Co., \$1.00)

A book of "poems" by an elderly bard. A diligent examination fails to disclose the faintest sign of merit in them.

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Dr. Mott accepted the conditions, and twelve persons were selected. After a most critical chemical analysis and microscopic examination had been made, five out of the twelve were decided upon. These cases were placed under Dr. Mott's care and reports published each week in the Post. In three months all were discharged by Dr. Mott as cured. The persons treated gained their normal weight, strength and appetite, and were able to resume their usual work. Anyone desiring to read the details of this public test can obtain copies by sending to Dr. Mott for them.

This public demonstration gave Dr. Mott an international reputation that has brought him into correspondence with people all over the world, and several noted Europeans are numbered among those who have taken his treatment and been cured, as treatment can be administered effectively by mail.

The Doctor will correspond with those who are suffering with Bright's Disease, Diabetes, or any kidney trouble whatever, and will be pleased to give his expert opinion free to those who will send him a description of their symptoms. An essay which the doctor has prepared about kidney trouble, and describing his new method of treatment, will also be mailed by him. Correspondence for this purpose should be addressed to **IRVINE K. MOTT, M. D., 575 Mitchell Bldg., Cincinnati, O.**

Shopping for THE SMART SET

A NEW DEPARTMENT has been added to this magazine beginning with the September issue.

We have engaged an experienced writer on women's finery and novelties, who will visit the best shops of New York to find what will become the latest fads, and give the advance information to the readers of SMART SET each month.

To residents of New York we can give notice of coming fashions and novelties before the stores display them. To our readers in other cities this information is of extreme value; because, if the articles described cannot be bought in their local shops, by writing to the Editor of The Shoppers' Department we can give the name and address of the store or stores where the articles described can be bought.

It is not our aim to give bargains; we want to tell our readers from Maine to California what they must buy or wear if they want to be "in the swim."

For instance, there is a new perfume that is all the rage in Paris, but you have not heard of it yet—don't you want to be the first to use it in your "set"? Our new department will tell you.

The buyers of New York's best shops will soon return from Europe laden with novelties—don't you want to know "what is what" for early Fall? Watch for our new department and you will know.

The September number will surely run out of print; order your copy in advance.

White Rock

"The World's Best Table Water"

Last Chance

*Special 30-Day Offer of
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Positively removes Freckles, Sunburn and all imperfections of the skin, and prevents wrinkles. Does not merely cover up, but eradicates them. Malvina Lotion and Ichthol Soap should be used in connection with Malvina Cream. At all druggists', or sent postpaid on receipt of price. Cream, 50c., Lotion, 50c., Soap, 25c., postpaid. Send for testimonials.

PROF. I. HUBERT, Toledo, Ohio

THE HOUSEHOLD APERIENT.






Time and Chance

An Advertisement by Elbert Hubbard



BORN into life without our permission, and being sent out of it against our will, Time is our one brief possession. Three thousand years ago Ecclesiastes wrote:

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but **TIME** and **CHANCE** happeneth to them all."

Are we masters of Time? In degree, yes, but the time to secure Life-Insurance is when you can. When life is full of joy, and hope soars high, and walking hand in hand, we sing the lovers' litany, "Love like ours can never die," then is the time to insure against the evil days to come.  The savage can not project his imagination from the Summer to the Winter. When the sun shines and the South Wind blows, he can not believe that grim winter will ever rage. There is where the savage differs from the Enlightened Man. The Winter and the snow will come to us all, but we smile with a quiet satisfaction when we realize that we know the worst, and have prudently provided against it.  Time and Chance! We extend the one and disarm the other by the aid of Life-Insurance. Chance comes only to individuals, but in the Law of Average there is no chance. And the stronger your Company the more is Chance put on Time's Toboggan.  Life-Insurance does not actually insure you against death but it provides for the papooses without fail in case of your call. Also it insures your peace of mind, and makes you more of a man—a better, healthier, happier, stronger, abler and more competent man. Thus is an extension placed upon Time, through the checkmate of Chance.

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